BUSINESS / B8

Docs mostly from St. Luke's to set up hospital for tourists in Subic

ENTERTAINMENT / D1

Another Pinay, Joanna Ampil, reprises Fantine role in 'Les Miz' in London

ACROSS / A15

MILF predicts more bombings in run-up to May elections

WORLD / A22

Bush to unveil new Iraq strategy, may send more troops

website: inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, January 10, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 33 P18

Cavite gov suspended; Remulla takes over

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of the Interior and Local Government yesterday suspended Cavite Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi for six months without pay over graft charges stemming from an alleged anomalous purchase of P7.5 million worth of rice in 2004.

CAVITE/ A4

Black Hawk up? US hits terror targets in Somalia

MOGADISHU, SOMALIA—TWO US AIR strikes in Somalia killed large numbers of Islamic extremists, government officials and witnesses said Tuesday. The targets were suspects in the bombings of two US embassies in East Africa in 1998.

The attacks by an AC-130 gunship came after the terror suspects were spotted hiding on a

BLACK HAWK/ A8

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF DEVOTION: The Black Nazarene breaks tradition when the procession of the image for the first time travelled all the way to the Quirino Grandstand outside of its shrine in Quiapo Church and its environs. The procession inches its way back to Quiapo, stalls at certain points like Taft Avenue, or whenever the supplications of the barefoot devotees get the better of them. AP

Palace: Perez innocent

Ex-DOJ chief 'is one of us,' says Ermita

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Armand N. Nocum

SAYING HERNANDO PEREZ "is one of us," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita "believes" the former justice secretary is innocent of the graft and extortion charges set to be filed by the Office of the Ombudsman against him.

The charges stem from the $2-million bribery complaint that former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez lodged against Perez, Ermita's Lakas party mate and fellow Batangueño.

"Nani is one of our allies, and deep inside me, I know what he is telling me is the truth," Ermita said at a briefing in Malacañang a day after it was announced that the Ombudsman had recommended the filing of charges against Perez, his wife Rosario, brother-in-law Ramon Arceo and business associate Ernest Escaler before the Sandiganbayan.

A panel of prosecutors found probable cause to indict Perez and the three others.

Ermita, a former congressman like Perez, said he could not possibly influence the court, referring to the Office of the Ombudsman, which is headed by Merceditas Gutierrez, a presidential appointee.

PALACE/ A4

JUST A TOUCH would do. The flock touch the rope holding the Nazarene statue in place or throw white handkerchiefs and towels at the custodians for them to wipe the venerated image for those too far to reach out to it. ERIK ARAZAS

Black Nazarene: Celebration of faith

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE ANNUAL DISPLAY OF FAITH AT yesterday's procession of the Black Nazarene, while no less fervid, resulted in fewer injuries because of the benign weather.

It also marked the first time since 1767 that the venerated image was brought in procession way beyond its Quaipo home grounds.

On the occasion of the Black Nazarene's 400th anniversary, the Archdiocese of Manila earlier decided to hold prayers and a vigil on Monday at the Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park, allowing devotees more time and space to view the venerated image of Christ.

An early morning high Mass celebrated by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales preceded the agape, or a sharing of food among the devotees. *(See story in Metro, Page A19.)*

According to Juliano Parena, training officer of the Fire Emergency Paramedic Assistance Group, there were no reports of fatalities at the procession this year, unlike last year when a devotee fell into a manhole and was trampled to death and another died of complications at the Philippine General Hospital.

"The overcast sky and less heat may have resulted in fewer injuries," he said, adding that the blazing sun and high temperatures in the past usually resulted in exhaustion and fainting spells among the devotees.

Parena, who has volunteered to provide first aid to injured devotees for the past six years, said the relatively cool

BLACK/ A4

Nuns pray for sun to shine on Cebu

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—NUNS PRAY FOR SUNshine while technicians mount surveillance cameras atop street lamps as Cebu province tries to make a rebound, a month after a storm and a string of terror alerts spoiled its "coming-out party" as host of the 12th Asean Summit.

Organizers here claimed they have emerged more prepared, thanks in a way to the government's controversial decision to reset the annual high-level meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that were originally scheduled last month.

"The postponement was a big letdown, but I said 'let's look at the positive side' and that's what we did: the additional days gave us time to improve, to fine-tune," said Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia in a media briefing yesterday marking the event's resumption.

Questions over the host's readiness to cope with both bad weather and alleged

NUNS PRAY/ A10

Asian leaders to wear pineapple, banana shirts

ASIAN LEADERS WILL DON TRADItional Filipino shirts handwoven from banana and pineapple fibers when they meet to discuss counterterrorism, trade and regional security at their regional summit in Cebu this week.

Fashion designer Jean Goulbourn will dress the 16 leaders in "barong Tagalogs" made from the fruit fibers for photo shoots at the summit of the Asso-

ASIAN LEADERS/ A10

RP peacekeepers dealt 'unkindest cut of all'

By Yvonne Chua and Luz Rimban
Contributors

(Last of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

FILIPINO PEACEKEEPERS IN Haiti know the perils of their mission all too well.

On Dec. 21, four of them came under fire from suspected gang members as they were escorting an official of the United Nations Stabilization Mission through the violent neighborhood of Cite Soleil.

The four Filipinos escaped unhurt in what was already the fourth incident in as many weeks involving the 200-strong Philippine military and police contingent in the capital Port-au-Prince. The scene of the attack was the same place where Army Staff Sgt. Antonio Batomalaque was shot dead in April 2005, the first Filipino peacekeeper to die in combat.

In three separate incidents between Nov. 18 and 22, demon-

RP PEACEKEEPERS/ A8

FILIPINO PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN LIBERIA: $1,000 allowance slashed by as much as 40 percent.

Now, it's Smith citing Philippine Constitution

By Tarra Quismundo

THE SUBIC RAPE CASE CONTINUES to rage despite the conviction of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith and his midnight transfer back to US custody.

In interviews yesterday with the INQUIRER, lawyers of the opposing camps argued their respective positions on a new petition filed by "Nicole" asking the Supreme Court to declare illegal a disputed provision in the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

Jose Justiniano, lawyer of the US Ma-

NOW/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over the eastern sections which may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with light rainshowers.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/09/07 SOURCE PAGASA

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2007

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Rains

2nd surgery for band leader Ely Buendia

SINGER-COMPOSER ELY BUENDIA, who underwent an emergency angioplasty on Sunday at the Asian Hospital in Alabang, needs a second surgery, his manager, Day Cabuhat confirmed last night.

"The first operation addressed only one arterial blockage," Cabuhat told the INQUIRER. "There's another one that requires immediate attention."

For the second procedure, Buendia, leader of the 1980s groundbreaking band Eraserheads—and who now heads another group, Pupil—may have to be transferred to another hospital, Cabuhat said.

Doctors blamed stress for the heart attack that the singer suffered Sunday evening while performing in Laguna. Buendia's band was booked solid during the recent holidays.

At press time, a source who has kept vigil at the hospital said the singer's blood pressure was "alarmingly low," but that he was conscious and even talked to a few friends by phone.

'Payanig' undervalued—PCGG

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD Government (PCGG) has accused the former owner of the "Payanig sa Pasig" property of undervaluing the disputed piece of land in order to be able to reacquire it for a cheaper price.

At a press briefing yesterday, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said real estate firm Ortigas & Co.—which owns and manages the Ortigas business district—wanted to enter into a compromise with the government on the property based on a much lower appraised value.

Abcede said he believed the 18.5-hectare property was worth as much as P18 billion while an independent property appraiser valued the property at only P3.3 billion, in its present state.

The final valuation will be the basis for any deal between Ortigas & Co. and the PCGG, to which the property was surrendered by Marcos associate Jose Y. Campos after the 1986 Edsa Revolution.

Disadvantageous

"We cannot allow it," Abcede said, when asked if the PCGG would enter into a deal with Ortigas & Co. based on the appraised value of Cuervo Appraisers Inc.

"This [value] is grossly disadvantageous to the government," he said.

Abcede, who heads the PCGG's effort to liquidate the assets sequestered from or surrendered by associates and the family of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, said Ortigas & Co. had been trying to seal a deal with the government "for many years now," but he said he was opposed to any settlement at below market prices.

The piece of prime land, which is the site of the popular Metrowalk arcade, among others, was sold by Ortigas & Co. to the late dictator Marcos for only P401 per square meter, allegedly under duress. The firm is now trying to regain control over it.

Under duress

"Like other cases, [Ortigas & Co.] claims that it sold this property under the barrel of a gun," Abcede said, adding that he was confident the courts would reject this argument and rule in favor of the government.

Ortigas is now negotiating with the PCGG for a 65-35 percent split of the property's value, in favor of the government. The deal, however, has proceeded at a snail's pace and was further delayed by the Senate's probe of the PCGG last year.

According to the Cuervo appraisal report, the Payanig property's peak value when fully developed will reach P9 billion—half only of what the PCGG is expecting—mainly because only 12.9 hectares could be dedicated to commercial use, while the rest will be allocated for Fort Bonifacio-type roadways and open spaces.

At this point, Abcede said, it was unnecessary to get the opinion of a third-party assessor like the Commission on Audit, because he was confident of the value placed on the property by the PCGG.

TV network sale

In a related development, Abcede said the PCGG was hoping to earn as much as P4.8 billion from the disposal of its stake in state-run television stations RPN-9 and IBC-13.

More importantly, Abcede said, telecommunications magnate Manuel V. Pangilinan remained "very interested" in acquiring either TV station.

"Up to now, he is still interested," he said of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chair.

He said El Shaddai leader Bro. Mike Velarde was also interested in acquiring IBC-13.

In addition to Pangilinan and Velarde, Abcede said, there were "some foreign groups" also interested in either IBC-13 or RPN-9.

Legal kinks

The Constitution, however, prohibits foreign entities from owning media companies in the country.

Abcede, who heads PCGG's asset management division, said RPN-9 was worth at least P1.3 billion, while IBC-13 was worth P3.5 billion, based on audits done of both firms a few years ago.

"IBC-13 is more valuable because of its properties," he said, referring to its real estate assets, including the Broadcast City compound in Quezon City.

Abcede said the PCGG was working with the Department of Finance's Privatization Management Office to iron out the legal kinks involving both television stations before they could be sold.

He said that both firms—sequestered from Marcos associates after the 1986 Edsa Revolution—were embroiled in litigation over their ultimate ownership.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER NO. 225
Series of 2007

Subject: **Allowing the importation of the broodstock of Pacific White Shrimp, *Penaeus vannamei* and the culture of the offspring thereof**

Following the successful experimental breeding by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Pacific White Shrimp, *Penaeus vannamei*, at the National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development Center (NIFTDC) in Bonoan-Binloc, Dagupan City and the culture of the fry produced therein in several accredited shrimp farms in Luzon from 2005 to 2006, during which the species demonstrated high productivity, profitability and low susceptibility to diseases, the existing ban on the import and culture of the said species as imposed by Fisheries Administrative Order 207 (FAO 207) Series of 2001 is hereby lifted under certain specific conditions and guidelines.

Section 1. Definition – The terms as used in this Order shall be construed as follows:

a. Pacific White Shrimp - species of shrimp native to the Pacific side of South and Central America and classified scientifically under the binomial system of nomenclature as *Pennaeus vannamei* or *Litopenaeus vannamei*. The species is also known as Whiteleg Shrimp and may also be referred to as *P. vannamei or L. vannamei*.
b. Broodstock - sub-adult animal either male or female that shall be used for breeding purposes.
c. Shrimp nauplius (plural nauplii) first larval stage of shrimp immediately upon hatching which still subsist on internal food reserve.
d. Shrimp postlarva (plural postlarvae) - Stage of development of shrimps upon metamorphosing into a juvenile shrimp. May also be referred to as shrimp fry or in its abbreviated form as PL.
e. Specific Pathogen Free - A condition indicating absence of specified disease organism or organisms as determined and certified as such by competent authority. May be abbreviated into SPF.
f. Specific Pathogen Resistant - A condition indicating resistance to specified organism or organisms as determined and certified as such by competent authority. May be abbreviated into SPR.
g. Guidelines - A set of rules that shall govern the import and culture of the aforementioned species.

Section 2. Requirements for Import and Culture - The import and culture of *Penaeus vannamei* shall be subject to the following conditions.

a. Import shall be limited only to broodstock shrimps.
b. All imports must be certified as Specific Pathogen Free/Specific Pathogen Resistant or SPF/SPR by the competent authority of the originating country.
c. Only shrimp hatcheries accredited by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) shall be allowed to import SPF or SPR *Penaeus vannamei* broodstock.
d. Only shrimp farms accredited by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) shall be allowed to culture SPF/SPR *P. vannamei* using shrimp postlarvae coming from accredited hatcheries.

Section 3. Guidelines for Import and Culture - Guidelines for the import of broodstock shrimps and the process of accreditation of hatcheries applying for license to import and propagate the aforementioned shrimp species and of shrimp farms wishing to culture the same shall be prepared by BFAR and shall form part of this Order. BFAR shall update these guidelines as required to reflect developments in technology and industry, upon consultation with industry stakeholders.

Section 4. Broodstock Development - The NFRDI is hereby directed to conduct studies on the development of local capability in producing SPF and SPR broodstock of *P. vannamei* as part of its research and development activities in collaboration with SEAFDEC.

Section 5. Prohibition - All imports of live shrimps prohibited under FAO 207, Series of 2001 remains in force except as previously specified in Section 2 hereof.

Section 6. Issuance and duration of import permit - An import permit shall be issued by the BFAR Director to qualified applicants based on the requirement of the importing entity after an application thereof has been filed and all requirements pursuant to this order and the guidelines prepared by BFAR have been satisfied provided advance notice shall be given to BFAR on the arrival details of each shipment covered by the import permit.

Section 7. Penalty - Violation of this order shall hold the offended liable to imprisonment for eight (8) years and a fine of eighty thousand pesos (P80,000.00) including the banning from being a member or stockholder in companies engaged in fisheries now existing or which may be created in the future and the destruction of the live imported shrimp and prawn or forfeiture of the non-live ones for proper disposition of the Director of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Section 8. Repeal - All orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this order are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 9. Effectivity - This order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and/or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and fifteen (15) days after its registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register.

ISSUED this 08 day of January, 2007 at Quezon City, Metropolitan Manila, Philippines.

(Sgd.) **ARTHUR C. YAP**
Secretary
Department of Agriculture

Recommended by:

(Sgd.) **MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

(Sgd.) **EMMANUEL M. PARAS**
Undersecretary for Operations, Fisheries and Livestock
Concurrently Chairman, NFARMC

(PDI--Jan. 10, 2007)

Bersamin suspect's son cries torture

By DJ Yap

PANDAY: 'He's innocent.'

JOAN BONDOC

THE SON OF FORMER ARMY Sgt. Rufino Panday, a suspect in the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr., yesterday claimed the police had tortured Panday into confessing his role in the crime.

"My father told me [that the policemen] were beating him up and giving him electric shocks," said Benjie Panday, as he staged a picket at the Quezon City Hall of Justice with about a dozen relatives.

"He's innocent. He did not do what they said he did," he said in Filipino.

Panday's lawyer Galileo Angeles had requested that his client be transferred to the city jail.

"There are unconfirmed reports that he's being manhandled [at Camp Karingal]," Angeles told Judge Rosanna Fe Romero Maglaya of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 88.

Maglaya's court had issued, early this month, an order to transfer Panday to the city jail, but his escorts had continued to hold him at the criminal investigation unit of the Quezon City Police District.

When Maglaya asked CIU homicide head Chief Insp. Clemente Barcena to explain why the order had not been followed, the official said he was acting on orders of CIU-chief Supt. Franklin Mabanag. Also, the paperwork had not been completed.

Later in the hearing, Angeles repeated his request, prompting the judge to say that there was no need to repeat "a standing order."

In an interview after the hearing, Angeles said Panday was a victim of "illegal arrest" days after the Dec. 16 killings of Bersamin and his bodyguard, as they were leaving Mount Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City.

Asked who was allegedly mistreating Panday, the lawyer said he still needed to consult with his client.

Asked if there was any truth that Panday was being "manhandled," Barcena said: "We did not manhandle anybody. That's just his lawyer's strategy."

He added that Panday would be taken to the city jail within the day.

Earlier, Panday had confessed to serving as "lookout" for the group tasked to carry out a P5-million contract to kill Bersamin.

He told police that former La Paz, Abra Vice Mayor Freddie Dupo had told him that Abra Gov. Vicente Valera was the brains behind the assassination.

Also yesterday, Maglaya approved a motion filed by prosecutors to consolidate the murders of Bersamin and his bodyguard into one case. As a result, Panday's arraignment did not push through.

No takers of admin's Senate slots

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DESPITE THE PROMISE OF A MUCH-BALLYhooed political machinery, President Macapagal-Arroyo is finding very few takers among her Cabinet to complete the administration's 12-member senatorial slate for the May elections.

"Why would anyone insist on running and spend money when they already have a government position?" said presidential legal counsel Sergio Apostol in an interview with the INQUIRER.

On Monday, Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes and Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap announced that they were not interested in leaving their posts to run for the Senate in the May polls.

Apostol said the biggest problem facing most Cabinet members was how to say no to the President's invitation to join her senatorial slate.

"The problem is the President wants them (Cabinet members) to run. It's really difficult to assemble 12 (senatorial candidates)," he said.

When asked why he himself was not running for the Senate, Apostol, a former congressman, replied: "I don't have (that kind of) money."

He estimated that a senatorial candidate would need at least P150 million for a campaign.

"Where will I find P150 million?" he said, bewailing what he called the "politics of the stomach" in the country.

He pointed out that while the administration's political machinery was an advantage, this was not enough to land one a Senate seat.

Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio, who is responsible for forming the administration slate, had previously claimed that the administration's political machinery would crush the opposition, whose bets had made a strong showing in recent mock polls.

Palace game plan: Take House, stop impeachment

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG'S GAME PLAN FOR THE MAY midterm elections involves retaining the majority in the House of Representatives in order to block yet another expected opposition attempt to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo, administration stalwarts said yesterday.

The opposition, however, is not quaking in its boots.

It only needs 79 votes, or one third of the members of the House, to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo come July, according to House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano.

Cayetano was one of those asked to join the opposition Senate slate being formed by ousted President Joseph Estrada.

He said the election battle would not occur in the Senate race anyway, which is expected to be dominated by President Arroyo's critics, but in the congressional elections.

Massive cheating

Opposition stalwart Rep. Rodolfo Plaza of Agusan del Sur, who is also being wooed by the Estrada camp to join its Senate slate, said he expected the majority—"by hook or by crook"—to take drastic steps to ensure its grip on power.

"They may resort again to massive cheating. In order to maintain decency and respect for our Constitution, the majority should let the people alone decide on the incoming members of the 14th Congress," Plaza said.

"My advice to the majority—avoid massive cheating. Otherwise there will be no peace, no unity, and this country will always be in political crisis and we cannot move forward as one people," he said.

As for the formation of a "third force" slate of senatorial candidates for the elections, Rep. Marcelino Libanan of Eastern Samar said this "will work to the advantage of the administration candidates and render the opposition weaker."

Libanan, along with Representatives Prospero Pichay Jr. and Juan Miguel Zubiri, is in the short list of administration candidates for senator from the House.

He said the third force option being considered by other senatorial bets was "clear proof that it is impossible for the opposition to unite and form a solid opposition ticket."

He said it would be impossible to unite the opposition because of the vested interests of its members.

"That's the problem when there's nothing that glues alliances but shallow personal interests and ill motives," Libanan said.

'Third force'

He was reacting to an INQUIRER story on Monday that said the Nacionalista Party under Senate President Manuel Villar and the Liberal Party wing of Senators Franklin Drilon and Francis Pangilinan were forming a "third force" with the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, PDP-Laban and Aksyon Demokratiko.

Pangilinan, however, objected to the use of the term "third force."

In a text message to the INQUIRER, he said that what they were proposing was "a common ticket for all reelectionist senators pushing for an independent and vigilant Senate."

Sonia Roco, the widow of former Sen. Raul Roco, said the idea of a third force "would speed up [the formation of a] coalition based on shared visions and values rather than the candidates' pro- or anti-Arroyo stances."

But Rep. Lorna Silverio of Bulacan said the third force would make the opposition "weaker."

"Whatever machinery they have now will be reduced to units working against each other," she said.

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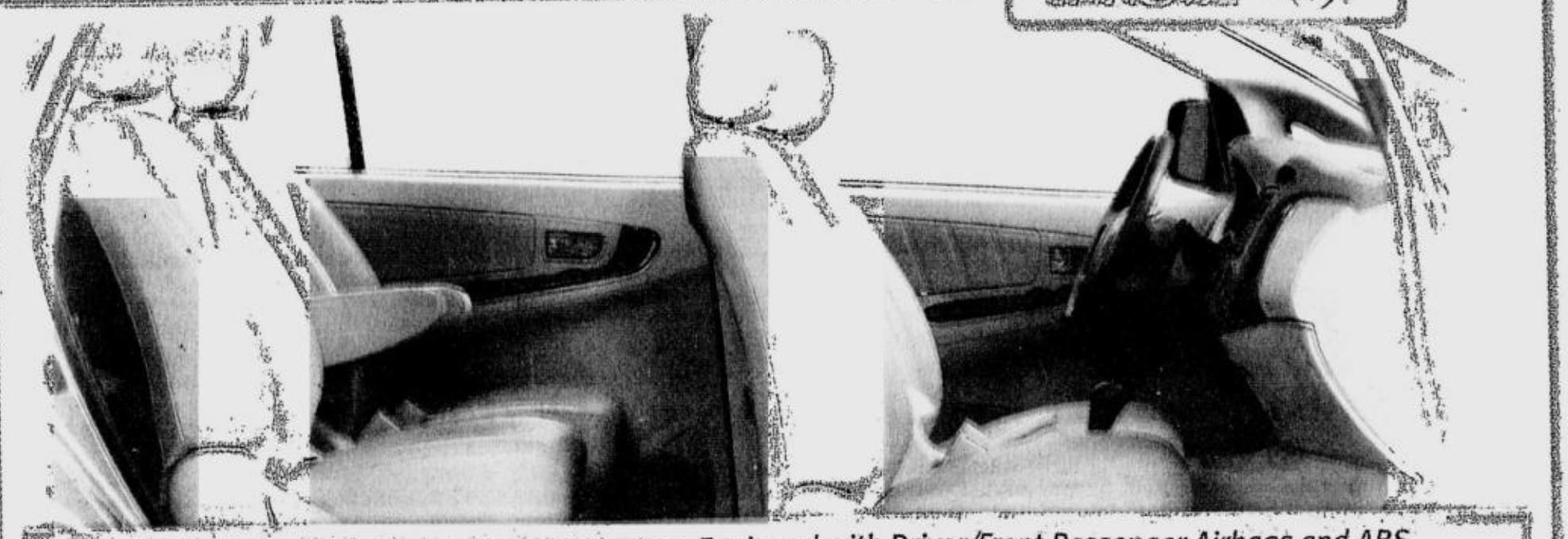

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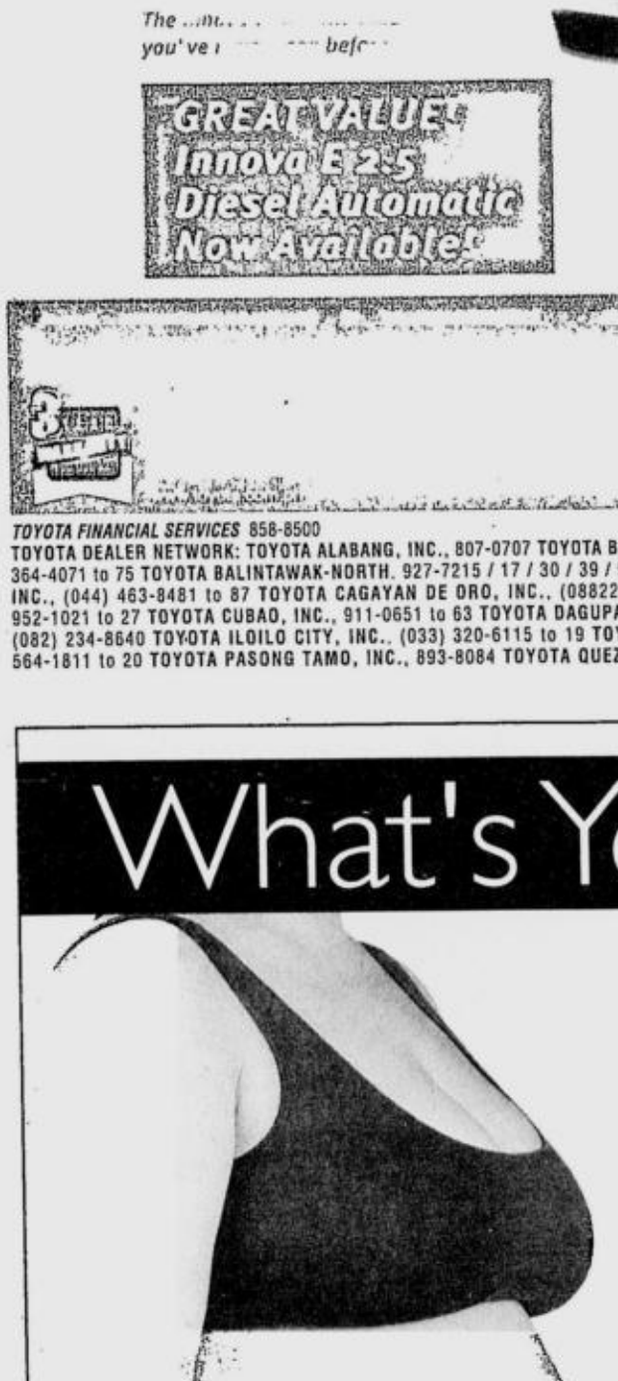
What's Your New Year's Resolution?



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Gonzalez liable for obstruction of justice, says Lacson

By TJ Burgonio and Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONzalez could be held liable for obstruction of justice for withholding from the Ombudsman documents crucial to the filing of extortion charges against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said yesterday.

Lacson said the extortion case filed against Perez "languished" in the Department of Justice in 2005 after Gonzalez ordered the Chief State Counsel to "hold" relevant documents provided by prosecutors in Switzerland.

"At his level, he sat on the documents. He didn't want these transmitted to the Ombudsman," Lacson told reporters at a press briefing. "Now what does this tell us? Secretary Gonzalez no less could be held liable for obstruction."

The Ombudsman issued a resolution Monday recommending the filing of graft and extortion charges against Perez before the Sandiganbayan in connection with the $2-million bribery case lodged against him by former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

Gonzalez acknowledged that confidential matters had prompted the DOJ to forego the release of a document it had obtained from Hong Kong authorities on accounts ultimately linked to Perez.

Gonzalez acknowledged that confidential matters had prompted the DOJ to forego the release of a document it had obtained from Hong Kong authorities on accounts ultimately linked to Perez.

"It (document) was something confidential so I said you (Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Paras) just hold it until it's necessary. Was there any crime there?" Gonzales asked.

Gonzalez said there was no case in his office, but "when it turned out that [the document] was needed in Hong Kong, I ordered the release of that document." He said the document came to him when he was a new at the justice department.

"I wasn't familiar with that case. It was brought to my attention by (Undersecretary) Paras, so I told him to just keep it until it was necessary," Gonzalez said.

Lacson said he was willing to file charges against Gonzalez with the Ombudsman after he prepared all the evidence.

Lacson said Swiss documents detailed the paper trail of the $2 million that Jimenez wired to an account in the Coutts Bank in Hong Kong in February 2001 for then Justice Secretary Perez supposedly in exchange for his endorsement of the Impsa deal.

The documents were sent to the DOJ, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, before the May 2004 national elections, according to the senator.

To prove his point, Lacson furnished reporters photocopies of a March 18, 2005 memorandum from Chief State Counsel Ricardo Paras III to Gonzalez, saying that he was submitting document: er-taining to Escaler's acco: or Gonzalez's signing and appi

In a hand-written margin: :e on the lower portion of the n no-randum, Gonzalez wrote back Paras: "Unless extremely neces-sary, let's hold this in the meantime." He signed it and wrote the date of March 30, 2005 below it.

Arthur Carandang, then acting assistant Ombudsman, wrote Gonzalez on March 11, 2005, to remind him about his office's earlier request for him to make the proper representation with his counterpart in Hong Kong in securing copies of Escaler's Account No. H013706 as well as affidavits of possible witnesses.

The request for assistance was transmitted to Gonzalez on July 13, 2004.

"This is the corpus delicti; the paper trail," Lacson said. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

Palace: Perez innocent; Ermita says ex-DOJ chief 'is one of us'

From page A1

"But of course, my sentiments and sympathies are with Secretary Nani," Ermita said.

"He knows that all his friends are all behind him in spirit," the executive secretary added.

Perez was one of the prosecutors at the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the filing of charges by the Ombudsman should be a "welcome development" for Perez because he would now be able to defend himself from the long-standing accusation against him.

Legal support

Defensor said Perez should face the charges on his own because "we have our own responsibilities to attend to."

But Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the government could give Perez legal support should he ask for it. *(See story above.)*

"He is entitled to a valid, credible defense. I would advise him to meet this head-on. There is no other way. You can't hide your head here under the sun. You have to meet it and come out made of sterner stuff," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, also a former congressman, pointed out that accusations were not synonymous with guilt.

"Of course there is such a thing as the best evidence is the document. But it can always be explained," Gonzalez said.

Bank documents

Based on bank documents presented by Jimenez, graft prosecutors said there was sufficient evidence that Perez and the others had committed illegal acts.

The documents included the $2-million deposit that Jimenez had wired to Escaler's account in Coutts Bank in Hong Kong in February 2001. The amount was transferred to Arceo and Rosario Perez's Swiss accounts.

Perez and his wife claimed that the funds were proceeds of the sale of their Batangas property to Escaler. But the Perezes earlier said that the funds were the inheritance of Rosario and Arceo.

Investigators found that the memorandum of understanding did not prove that a sale took place.

In a privilege speech in 2002, then Representative Jimenez said that Perez had demanded that he execute affidavits against cronies of Estrada, which could be used against them if they would not support President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

Jimenez said that when he refused, Perez cursed and threatened him in front of his wife at their home in Forbes Park in Makati City in the third week of January 2001.

He said that Escaler came up with the proposition that Jimenez just pay $2 million to which Perez agreed.

Just fall guy?

Asked whether Jimenez could also be charged with bribing a government official, Gonzalez said: "The better way I think here is to indict him also. First he is the source of the money. So in a way he is a bribe giver."

At the House of Representatives, Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano said "there is more here than meets the eye."

Cayetano said Perez appeared to be just the fall guy.

"Who is really behind this? Many are asking why bribery and extortion and not plunder? Plunder is not bailable and would be an incentive for former Secretary Perez turn state witness and point to the more guilty," he said.

With his reputation at stake, Perez should spill the beans and identify the other beneficiaries of the payoff, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño said.

"My suggestion to Perez is to tell the plain and simple truth on who benefited from the $2-million Impsa payoff," Casiño said.

The Department of Justice, under Perez, issued a favorable legal opinion that paved the way for the signing of the contract less than a month after Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency in January 2001. Perez quit in early 2003 amid charges he had extorted money from Jimenez.

Documents gathered by prosecutors showed that Jimenez deposited $2 million in February 2001 in beneficiary account H013706 at Coutts Bank in Hong Kong from the Trade and Commerce Bank, Cayman Islands, through Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

Rep. Benasing Macara on o: Lanao del Sur said it was a laudable move on the part of the Ombudsman to finish the probe of the extortion case against Perez.

Getting Perez's side

"Ombudsman Gutierrez showed total independence by not allowing her former relationship with Perez as his deputy at the justice department to affect her agency's probe," Macarambon said.

For the second straight day yesterday, the INQUIRER failed to contact Perez.

At around 11 a.m., the INQUIRER called Perez's home at Mount View Subdivision in Batangas City, but a certain Ka Lita said Perez was not there.

She said that the last time Perez was home was at 10 a.m. on Saturday and that he left immediately after getting a few things.

The INQUIRER also tried to call Perez's wife Rosario but she could not be reached on her mobile phone.

The phones at his houses in Ayala Alabang Village and in Pasig City could also not be reached.

...ll turned off

Through his mobile phone, the INQUIRER was able to reach Arceo. But the INQUIRER was asked to call back after five minutes.

When the INQUIRER called again, the phone had been turned off.

The INQUIRER called again at around 1 p.m. and a woman, who identified herself as Arceo's secretary, answered.

She said her boss was at a Rotary meeting but he had left his phone. *With reports from Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon; and Michael Lim Ubac*

Cavite governor suspended again; Remulla takes over

From page A1

Vice Gov. Juanito Victor Remulla, Maliksi's erstwhile political ally, was immediately installed as acting governor.

It was the second time that the DILG served the suspension order on the governor. On Aug. 16, 2005, it tried to carry out the Ombudsman's directive, but Maliksi and the other officials charged in the case obtained a preliminary injunction from the Court of Appeals.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno issued the latest order, dated Jan. 8, 2007, in compliance with a directive from Deputy Ombudsman Victor Fernandez on Aug. 15, 2005. He instructed the governor to yield his post to Remulla "in acting capacity, pursuant to Section 46 of the Local Government Code."

The suspension arose from an administrative complaint filed by Remulla against the governor in connection with the 2004 purchase of 7,500 sacks of rice worth P7.5 million without a public bidding.

Revilla role?

In an interview with radio dzMM yesterday, Maliksi accused Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., a former Cavite governor, of being behind the revival of the suspension against him. Revilla vehemently denied the allegation in a mobile phone interview with the INQUIRER, calling Maliksi a liar.

Maliksi handily beat Revilla in the 2001 gubernatorial elections.

Maliksi claimed that sometime last year, Revilla had talked to him and asked him to accommodate the senator's wife, actress Lani Mercado, as the governor's running mate in the coming May elections.

"(Revilla) wanted me to make his wife as my vice governor. I told him that I could not decide on my own because I had to consult first with my party mates (in the Liberal Party) and the local officials of the province," he said.

He said that most of his supporters did not approve of the proposal. He said that when he informed Revilla about his decision, the actor-turned-politician got angry and threatened to do everything to revive the suspension order against him.

Lani not running

Revilla said that he was hurt by Maliksi's allegations.

"That's not true. Am I in the position to do that? I definitely don't have anything to do with it. I have no control over that. He's a liar," he said.

He also denied that he asked Maliksi to consider his wife as the governor's running mate. Lani, he said, had already decided not to run for any elective post.

The senator said it was Maliksi who went to him and brought up the idea for Lani to run as vice governor. He said the governor wanted the ruling Lakas party and the LP to form a coalition for the provincial elections.

Revilla said Maliksi was discrediting him and his wife "just like what he did when I lost to him in 2001."

Maliksi said he was still talking with his lawyers on what legal course to take following his suspension.

The governor was not around when Roberto Abejero, DILG-Calabarzon director, and his staff served the order at around 2:10 p.m.

Abejero said Maliksi's presence was not necessary as the receipt of the memorandum was just ceremonial. He said he served the notice of suspension to the governor's two executive assistants, who both refused to receive and sign the document.

Oath-taking

Remulla took his oath before Abejero, Trece Martires Judge Aurelio Icasiano and Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan, Calabarzon police director. Several local officials and supporters of the vice governor were present.

At around 5:30 p.m., around 100 supporters of Maliksi flocked to the governor's office to express their support.

Around 30 heavily armed policemen were deployed within the capitol complex. Remulla said he had ordered the police commander to exercise maximum tolerance and prohibit anybody from assembling in front of the capitol.

SC petition

In an effort to block his suspension in 2005, Maliksi's supporters barricaded the whole complex and held overnight vigils. The governor holed up inside his office until he won a temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals nine days after.

The appellate court subsequently ordered a preliminary injunction which it eventually lifted.

Maliksi filed a petition for certiorari which is pending with the Supreme Court.

Remulla said he had no plans of physically occupying Maliksi's office and would rather stay at the vice governor's office. He appealed to Maliksi's supporters to stay calm, respect the rule of law, "and wait for this issue to be resolved peacefully."

He said that more than the position, the suspension order gave him the chance to vindicate himself from allegations that the case he filed against Maliksi was politically motivated.

Maliksi had earlier claimed that President Macapagal-Arroyo had influenced the Ombudsman's decision to suspend him because he had called for the President's resignation following several controversies that rocked her administration. *With a report from Alcuin Papa in Manila*

Black Nazarene: A celebration of 400 years of faith

From page A1

weather also enabled the procession to take a slower pace and somehow lessen the crowd's frenzy.

Familiar sights

He observed that the image "took a longer route because of its anniversary, so it took some time for it to reach Quiapo Church [unlike last year]."

The procession commemorates the first procession to transfer the Black Nazarene from a church in Intramuros to the Minor Basilica in Quiapo on Jan. 9, 1767.

A familiar sight accompanied the image as it was taken from the Quirino Grandstand for the journey back to Quiapo—barefoot devotees clad in maroon or purple, packed behind the carriage pulling at the ropes or waving white handkerchiefs and towels.

On Quezon Boulevard, the overcast skies over Quiapo lit up with firecrackers when the image arrived in the early afternoon.

Again, white handkerchiefs and towels were waved and the crowd erupted into loud cheers as a number of men tried—successfully or in vain—to clamber onto the carriage in an attempt to touch the image.

As the frenzy escalated at around 3 p.m., a number of devotees were taken to nearby ambulances for foot injuries and abrasions.

Many young men were seen boldly leaping onto the carriage, wiping the image with a towel, and then diving back into the heaving crowd.

Some of the elderly faithful complained of chest pains and difficulty in breathing. A devotee estimated to be in his late 60s was taken to the University of the Santo Tomas Hospital for treatment of what appeared to be a mild cardiac arrest.

Volunteer staff of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) said many of the devotees fainted because they had been fasting.

100,000 in Quiapo

"They have made it their vow not to eat breakfast or lunch on the feast day of the Black Nazarene," said a PNRC volunteer.

Police estimated the crowd in Quiapo at 100,000.

Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, acting director of the Manila Police District, said there were more devotees this year than in 2006.

Hundreds of maroon-clad male devotees milled on the sidelines, unmindful of their muddy, sometimes bloody, feet.

Luis de Lena, 65, a devotee for 16 years, carried a bottle full of incense powder and pictures of the Black Nazarene.

"Jesus Christ has been good to us, and this is our way of thanking Him," said a barefoot De Lena.

Various images of the Black Nazarene were also paraded on streets surrounding Plaza Miranda.

Devotees likewise threw their towels and handkerchiefs at the "image custodians," who would dutifully rub these on the images for their owners.

But Parena was not pleased.

"They should not even be holding processions on the same day as the Black Nazarene," he said, explaining that the smaller statues had been assigned another day for a procession.

"And still the groups that own these statues insist on doing this, adding to the streets' congestion," he added, shaking his head.

Now, it's Smith citing Philippine Constitution

From page A1

rine whose case was the first to test the 1999 agreement governing the conduct of visiting American troops, said the high court could dismiss Nicole's petition "outright" as it had already upheld the constitutionality of the VFA and thrown out a taxpayers' suit filed against it by senators, activists and lawyers' groups in October 2000.

But Evalyn Ursua, lawyer of the Filipino complainant who won the historic rape case, expressed the belief that the high court would give the petition due course because the earlier ruling was made without a concrete case to consider.

Smith was convicted on Dec. 4 of raping Nicole at the back of a van during a short ride at the Subic Bay Freeport, a former US naval base, on Nov. 1, 2005. He is appealing his conviction.

On Monday, Ursua filed a petition asking the high court to declare unconstitutional Article 5, Paragraph 6, of the VFA, which grants US authorities custody of American servicemen charged in Philippine courts "from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Issues of first instance

The petition also seeks the issuance of an arrest warrant against Smith and questions his clandestine transfer on Dec. 29 to the US Embassy from the Makati City Jail, to which he was committed upon his conviction.

"[Regarding the] constitutionality of the VFA, the Supreme Court already made a ruling on that ... Even the Supreme Court respects judicial precedence, unless there is a compelling reason. And in this case, there is none," Justiniano said.

But Ursua said the legal question raised by her client on the VFA had not been ruled upon by the Supreme Court and that the issues the petition sought to ventilate were "issues of first instance," or matters being brought up for discussion in the high court for the first time.

"You can't say that the Supreme Court has already declared the VFA constitutional when it was never confronted with the concrete application of [the agreement's] provisions in a specific case, where a victim is involved," she said.

Justiniano said that while he had yet to read through Nicole's petition, he would cite the Supreme Court's earlier decision in favor of the VFA in answering the latest pleading.

'Wholesale' affirmation

"We are prepared to file the comment but we will wait for the Supreme Court to require us to file a comment because that might not be necessary as the issues in the petition had been resolved before ... But if ever I will be required by the Supreme Court to answer, then I will cite the case as a ground against it," he said.

In October 2000, the Supreme Court upheld the VFA as constitutional and ruled against the taxpayers' suit filed by Senators Sergio Osmeña III, Raul Roco (now deceased) and Teofisto Guingona Jr., former Senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto Tañada, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and its allied militant groups, and a number of lawyers' groups.

Justiniano said he believed that such a ruling could apply to Nicole's petition.

But Ursua said the ruling's "wholesale" affirmation of the VFA must not cause the dismissal of the petition *motu proprio*, or even before it could be discussed and answered by the respondents.

"Why would the court dismiss our petition now when, in fact, the issues are more concrete? I don't see that the court will dismiss this one when it [takes cognizance of issues] of transcendental importance, such as that taxpayers' suit. And this is a suit where an offended party is involved, a specific case where the VFA is applied," Ursua said.

She said she was confident that the tribunal would deliberate on the petition because it had entertained a similar petition from Nicole questioning the same VFA provision. That petition was filed in June last year, before the rape trial began.

According to Ursua, the high court may consolidate the two petitions involving the same issues and rule on these in one resolution.

Janjalani's alive, says brother

By Alcuin Papa

THE BROTHER OF THE PHILIPPINES' most wanted man said yesterday he was confident that his sibling, head of the country's most dangerous Muslim rebel group, was still alive despite reports that he may have been killed.

DNA tests will be conducted in the United States on Jan. 16 to see if a decomposing body found by government troops in December in Jolo was Khaddafy Janjalani, chief of the Abu Sayyaf group.

But Hector Janjalani told a local TV station that reports his brother was dead were fabricated so that a US bounty of $5 million (P243 million) could be collected.

"Why would I agree [to give them DNA samples] when I am certain that he is still alive?" Hector said. "What could happen is that, because of the hefty reward ... they will make it appear that it is positive (the DNA test). Not only will they get money, but it will also earn them brownie points."

However, a police official said yesterday that saliva samples had already been taken from Hector last week, confirming an earlier INQUIRER report.

Dep. Dir. Gen. Avelino Razon, the Philippine National Police's Deputy Chief for Administration said "samples (from Hector) were voluntarily given."

Hector is presently detained at the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa.

Janjalani, believed to be 31, is on the US Federal Bureau of Investigation's list of most wanted terrorists. Tissue samples from the body had been given to an FBI team and a US embassy spokesperson said the results would be known later this month.

Razon said they would send Dr. Lorna Santos and two officials from the PNP Crime Laboratory to the US to witness the test. They would be accompanied by US Embassy Legal Attache Steve Cutler.

The analysis will be conducted at the FBI Training Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Last December, the military said it had dug up what it said was the body of Janjalani in Patikul, Sulu. Military informers said Janjalani died in September after an encounter with government forces.

Some Philippine intelligence officers, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the body was unlikely to be Janjalani's because there were reported sightings of him in October, a month after the supposed gun battle that killed him.

"We are 90 percent sure it was not him," said one.

Janjalani is the younger brother of the Abu Sayyaf's late founder, Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, who was shot by police on the southwestern island of Basilan in 1998.

The Abu Sayyaf became notorious in the '90s when it staged kidnapping sprees, particularly at the Sipadan beach resort in Malaysia where it abducted tourists, mostly Europeans, and the Dos Palmas beach resort in Palawan, where victims included American couple Martin and Gracia Burnham.

They claimed responsibility for the Philippines' worst terror attack in February 2004 when a bomb crippled a ferry near Manila, killing more than 100 people, and for coordinated bombings in Manila and Mindanao in February 2005 that killed 10. *With a report from Reuters*

V-Day blast: cops got wrong man, says suspect's ma

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE HAVE THE WRONG VALENTINE'S Day bomber, the mother of an arrested suspect in the 2005 incident told media yesterday.

Pacita Ayeras, mother of Ricardo Ayeras alias Abdul Kareem, said her son was a "fall guy" of the police.

"Why have they accused my son of these things? He is a quiet and kind man," a teary-eyed Pacita told reporters in Camp Crame.

Speaking for the emotional Pacita, Ayeras' uncle, Eduardo Arabit, said his nephew was suffering from a liver ailment.

Arabit added that a certain "Boy Negro," an accused in the Valentine's Day bombing, had mistakenly identified Ayeras as the "Abdul Kareem" who is wanted for the bombing.

"Abdul Kareem is a common Muslim name. There are a lot of people named Abdul Kareem," said Arabit, himself a convert to Islam.

He cited an earlier report which said one of the suspects in the Valentine's Day bombing was a certain Abdul Kareem Deladia.

This might have confused police, Arabit said.

Pacita, 61, said she fainted when she saw her son being paraded as a suspect on TV the other night. Since then, she has not eaten or slept. "I have been crying since last night."

She also begged police authorities to release her son. "He has nothing to do with the crime. He is sickly and needs medical attention."

She admitted, however, that she has not seen her son since 2005. "He has been very secretive and refused to talk about his affairs or his problems."

Philippine National Police Intelligence Group head Chief Supt. Romeo Ricardo said he would allow Pacita and other relatives to visit Ayeras at the PNP Custodial Center today.

Ricardo's men arrested Ayeras on Jan. 3 in Tagkawayan, Quezon, based on an arrest warrant for rebellion issued by a Makati City judge. The charges stemmed from Ayeras' supposed participation in the 2005 Valentine's Day bombing in Makati City that killed three and injured 103 others.

Ricardo said Ayeras was a close associate and a henchman of Hilarion "Ahmad" Santos, one of the founders of the Rajah Sulaiman Movement (RSM).

The RSM, according to police, is a radical group of Muslim converts with ties to the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Jemaah Islamiya, a terror ring based in Indonesia with links to Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Ricardo said the RSM had carried out the 2005 Valentine's Day bombing as part of its "Operation Big Bang," a plot to set off bombs in prime targets in Metro Manila.

N. Magno; 82

NEMENCIANO F. MAGNO, A RETIRED employee of the Department of Public Works and Highways, will be buried today at the Alua Cemetery in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija.

He died on Thursday at the age of 82. He is survived by his daughters Evelyn, Rubie and Elsie, sons Jessie and Ronnie and siblings Benny M. Bunag, Gloria Medina, Ofelia Narciso and Lucita Magno.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 10, 2007
1st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 2:14-18
Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

As soon as Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue, Jesus went to the home of Simon and Andrew with James and John. As Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever, they immediately told him about her. Jesus went to her and taking her by the hand, raised her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. That evening at sundown, people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had evil spirits: the whole town was pressing around the door. Jesus healed many who had various diseases, and drove out many demons; but he did not let them speak, for they knew who he was.

Very early in the morning, before daylight, Jesus went off to a lonely place where he prayed. Simon and the others went out, too, searching for him; and when they found him they said, "Everyone is looking for you." Then Jesus answered, "Let's go to the nearby villages so that I may preach there too; for that is why I came."

So Jesus set out to preach in all the synagogues throughout Galilee; he also cast out demons.

Commentary

Jesus is like us in every way, merciful and faithful before God on our behalf. He was tested and suffered and because of this he is able to help us. Jesus leaves the synagogue and enters the house of Simon and Andrew and immediately (this word will be repeated often in Mark's gospel—it is a demand that we respond NOW to what is happening and being said) they tell him about Simon's mother in law. Jesus immediately grasps her by the hand and raises her up—he grasps her from the grip of evil and sickness/death and raises her to life in God with him. And she immediately bends to wait on them, to serve them and to be a disciple who follows in gratitude. Now her house becomes a church where all who need this freedom and release from bondage can come to be set free.

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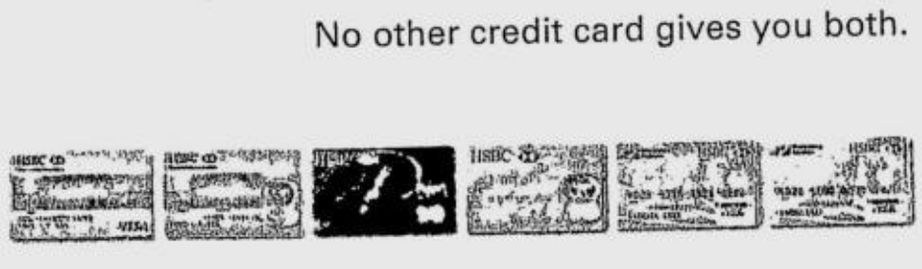

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BIR undaunted by 2007 collection target—Buñag

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE IS not fazed by the P734 billion tax collection goal set by the national government this year, according to BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag.

In a speech during the tax agency's first flag ceremony for the year, Buñag yesterday told revenue officials and employees that 2007 would surely test their mettle to match or even surpass the new target.

"In my estimation, this year's P734 billion goal of the BIR is not meant to intimidate the bureau, but rather it is a statement of the government's faith in our capacity and commitment," he said.

He added that if treasury bills (T-bills) operations would be included, the BIR collection target for 2007 would reach P784.09 billion.

Buñag said that the tax target seemed difficult to achieve but his faith in the men and women of the BIR boosted his confidence.

Preliminary records show that the BIR has already collected P615.72 billion purely from its operations (P646.97 billion if it includes the withholding taxes/documentary stamp taxes generated in the T-bill operations of the treasury).

The amount represents the unprecedented increase of 21.40 per cent or P108.62 billion (or P104.27 billion if it includes the taxes from the treasury operations) over collections for 2005.

"While these are still tentative figures, I am confident that when all our collections for 2006 have been completely accounted for, we will be able to celebrate an even significant collection performance for 2006," Buñag said.

He pointed out that the BIR's greatest strength was its people, and year after year, this truth has been borne out by successive generations of revenuers.

He noted that in mid-2006, the bureau's employees were among the much maligned people in government because of unfair criticisms from uncooperative sectors.

Despite this, however, the BIR focused on its collection efforts and was able to surpass its own collection target in 2006 by P10 billion.

"Such commendations do not belong to me, but are the rightful accolades that are due the men and women of the revenue service," he said.

Port of Batangas records new high in collection surplus

IF THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS MANAGED to achieve its 2006 collection target of P197 billion, part of the credit goes to the Port of Batangas, which exceeded its own collection target by over P9 billion last year.

Tasked to collect 16 percent of the bureau's target, the Port of Batangas posted a record collection pf P40.86 billion last year, exceeding its collection target of P31.62 billion. This is almost 30 percent or 9.239 billion over the target, according to Batangas port district collector Gracia Zuno Caringal.

The collection increase, unprecedented in the Port of Batangas, almost matched the cumulative nine-year excess collection P9.6 billion from 1996 to 2005, she said in the port's annual collection report.

The port posted a first quarter collection of 144.6 percent over its target of P6.065 billion. In the second quarter, it collected P4.7 billion over target and the third quarter saw an impressive surplus of P7.6 billion over the period's target.

By the end of October last year, the Batangas port had already met its P34.19 billion and even posted a surplus of P2.563 billion.

With the collection record the Port of Batangas topped the collection districts in actual cash collection performance.

Pagcor posts record P25-B take in another banner year

AS IS ALWAYS THE CASE, the bank wins again.

Thus did the country's only authorized casino operator, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (Pagcor), celebrate another banner year last year.

Based on its latest, unaudited financial report, the state-run gaming firm posted an unprecedented P25.4 billion in revenue last year.

Paving the way for the record-breaking year was the P12.22 billion income for the first half of 2006 alone. Pagcor then breached P2 billion monthly income mark in August.

In a press statement, Pagcor said it has earned "the respectability as one of the most well-run organizations in the country today as well as one of the most transparent and successful casino operators worldwide." The Pagcor board is headed by its chair and chief executive officer Efraim C. Genuino.

It said that "through a strong leadership and the introduction of stringent cost-cutting measures as well as innovative marketing strategies, the current Pagcor management has been able to fully maximize the income-generating capabilities of the corporation. With a united Board, a motivated workforce and well-placed infrastructure for growth, there is no way for Pagcor to miss its targets."

Pagcor has posted record collections year after year. Its 2005 total annual income of P23.4 billion was 6.8-percent higher than the P21.9 billion it posted the year before.

On the other hand, Pagcor's 2002 income of P20.21 billion propelled the state-run gaming firm to No. 1 money-maker among Philippines corporations for that year, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Earlier, the corporation collected 17.46 billion in 2001—a staggering 19.4 percent higher than the P14.6 billion in 2000—a year after Genuino took over at the helm of the state-run gaming firm.

After the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, Pagcor is the top revenue contributor to the national government. In 2005, a total of P11.95 billion was remitted to the national government.

"More than our success in business, we are truly pleased to have been able to deliver on our commitment to serve the people. The bottom line is that everything that we earn goes back to the government and, in turn, is used for the betterment of the lives of our countrymen," Genuino said in the press statement.

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Customs seizes diesel tanker

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE OIL TANKER APPREHENDED on New Year's day at the Pasig River was formally turned over to the Bureau of Customs yesterday after the Philippine Coast Guard found that its documents and other evidence indicated that it was involved in an attempt to smuggle diesel into the country.

The MT Patricia, which was loaded with 600,000 liters of diesel, was taken into custody on Jan. after it was stopped and inspected at the PCG's Arroceros checkpoint along the Pasig River in Manila.

The Coast Guard said that based on its transshipment permits, the tanker's cargo was supposed to be offloaded to the two foreign vessels—M/V Mol Aspiration and M/V Saipan Winner—at the South Harbor.

The PCG then questioned the tanker's presence in the Pasig River and decided to apprehend it. The crew said that the two foreign vessels supposed to get the diesel were not at the South Harbor, a PCG official earlier said.

In a statement, the PCG yesterday said the tanker had violated the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines.

It said it had found on board the tanker a withdrawal certificate for manufactured petroleum products showing that the 600,000 liters of gas oil from Tri-Solid Movers Services Inc. would be delivered to a certain Andan, the alleged consignee, at the Nagtahan depot.

A radio message from Bunkers Manila Inc., the tanker's operator, found on January 1 also stated that the vessel was scheduled to discharge its contents the following day.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 225-1:
Series of 2007 .....)

Subject: Guidelines for the Importation and Culture of the Pacific White Shrimp *(Penaeus vannamei)*

Pursuant to the provisions of Fisheries Administrative Order No 225, Series of 2007 entitled "Allowing the importation of the broodstock of Pacific White Shrimp *(Penaeus vannamei)* and culture of the offspring thereof" the following rules and regulations are hereby issued:

Section 1. Shrimp Broodstock Importation — the following measures shall be observed in the importation of *P. vannamei* broodstock:

a. **Pre-border Biosecurity Measures**

1.) Prior to the issuance of special import permit to accredited shrimp hatchery for importation of SPF/SPR *P. vannamei* broodstock, Proponent shall submit a CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE duly signed by the National BFAR Director. The issuance of the Certificate shall be based on the results of the inspection of hatchery facilities that shall be authorized to breed *P. vannamei*. Inspection and accreditation shall be undertaken by National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) to be assisted by concerned BFAR Regional Offices.

2.) The broodstock to be imported must only come from the following Pacific White Shrimp broodstock facilities originating from the United States of America known to have the capacity in producing broodstock that are Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) and/or Specific Pathogen Resistant (SPR):
i. High Health Aquaculture, Incorporated (Hawaii)
ii. Kona Bay Marine Resources (Hawaii)
iii. Molokai Sea Farms International (Hawaii)
iv. Rainbow Hawaii Farms (Hawaii)
v. Shrimp Production Hawaii Inc (Hawaii)
vi. Shrimp Improvement Systems, Incorporated (Florida)
vii. Harlingen Shrimp Farms, Ltd. (Texas)
viii. SyAqua USA (Kentucky)

The SPF-SPR facilities verified list is subject to change periodically depending on the updated list provided by the Oceanic Institute or the United States Marine Shrimp Farming Program Consortium.

3.) The broodstock facility selected by the importer must have a minimum two (2) years disease free status as certified by competent authority from the country of origin. In addition, the broodstock facility shall likewise submit its disease history for the period covering its commercial establishment to the present.

4.) The broodstock facility shall submit samples taken from the lot where the intended stock for shipment shall be drawn. Said samples shall be forwarded to the USMSFP Shrimp Disease Reference Laboratory, the Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory, Department of Veterinary Science and Microbiology, University of Arizona, for diagnostic as to their SPF status on the following pathogens:
a. Taura Syndrome Virus (TSV)
b. White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV)
c. Infectious hypodermal and Haematopoietic Necrosis Virus (IHHNV)
d. Yellow Head Virus Disease (YHVD)
e. Baculovirus Penaeid (BP)
f. Hepatopancreatic Parvo-like Virus (HPV)
g. Necrotizing Hepatopancreatitis (NHP)
h. Monodon Baculo Virus (MBV)
i. Baculoviral Mid-gut Gland Necrosis Virus (BMN)
j. Infectious Myo Necrosis Virus (IMNV)

5.) No import permit shall be issued unless the documents specified in the pre-border Biosecurity measures shall have been complied with.

6.) The imported broodstock shall be allowed entry into the country only at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), the broodstock shipment should take the most direct route from its origin to the Philippines. No trans-shipment will be allowed. Should there be an interruption in the transport (delayed or cancelled flights), any competent authority within the area shall be notified immediately. Said authority shall issue a certification relating to the interruption and certify that the shipment was not co-mingled with other shipment and that the intended shipment was not subjected to any risk of contamination. In case of broodstock shipment using chartered or special flights to other Philippine international airports other than NAIA, an advance notice shall be given to BFAR Central Office, to enable designated Fisheries Quarantine Officers and Fish Health Officers to be present at the port of entry.

b. **Border Inspection Measures**

1. Upon arrival, the imported broodstock shall be presented for documentary inspection at the Fisheries Inspection and Quarantine Service (FIQS) at the NAIA.
2. After documentary inspection and verification, the imported broodstock shall be transported directly to the BFAR accredited shrimp hatchery facility. The importer, or its designated representative, together with representative from the Fisheries Regulatory and Quarantine Division (FRQD) will accompany transfer to the facility.
3. One percent (1%) but not more than ten (10) pieces of representative broodstock sample will be turned over to BFAR Fish Health Central Laboratory for verification of the laboratory results given prior to shipping and accompanying Health Certificate.

c. **Post-border Biosecurity Measures**

Upon arrival at the facility, the broodstock shall be confined in designated holding tanks for quarantine and subsequent maturation and breeding purposes.

d. **Testing and Disease Detection**

1. At PL1-PL3, samples shall be taken from the larval rearing tanks for testing. As per OIE Diagnostic Manual for Aquatic Animal Disease (2006).
2. All samples shall be subjected for analysis for Taura Syndrome Virus (TSV), Baculovirus Penaeid (BP), Necrotizing Hepatopancreatitis (NHP) and Infectious Myo-Necrosis Virus (IMNV) at their respective BFAR Regional Fish Health Laboratories or any accredited laboratory.
3. Regular monitoring for the four (4) above mentioned OIE reportable diseases of *P. vannamei* will be conducted by their respective BFAR Regional Fish Health Laboratories, as per OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animal (2006).
4. In case of conflict on results, verification shall be done solely by BFAR Central Fish Health Laboratory in Quezon City. Results issued by BFAR Central Health Laboratory shall be final.

e. **Certifying the broodstock**

1. To keep the integrity and Quality of Postlarvae used for commercial production in different farming systems, only the original certified SPF/SPR broodstock from BFAR verified and recognized broodstock facilities and stocked at accredited shrimp hatcheries shall be the only source of the shrimp postlarvae. The selling of shrimp eggs and nauplii by accredited hatcheries to other shrimp hatcheries is strictly prohibited.
2. Replacement for spent broodstock shall always originate from verified SPF/SPR shrimp stock only. No Philippine island-born broodstock shall be returned to the accredited hatcheries to produce the postlarvae. Violation of this regulation will warrant outright cancellation of hatchery accreditation. This shall be strictly implemented.

f. **Minimum Biosecurity Standards for Controlled Hatchery Facility** - The importer shall comply with the minimum biosecurity standards for broodstock maturation, larval rearing and production of F1 offspring, prior to the issuance of an import permit. The following standards shall be used in evaluation of each application of proponent shrimp hatchery for accreditation:

1 Water Treatment - The water treatment system should ensure the provision of high quality water. The following protocol is prescribed:
   a. Incoming water filtration. Initial filtering through sub-sand well ponds, sand filters (gravity and pressure) or mesh bag filters into the first reservoir for settling tank. After disinfection, final filtration using fine mesh filter bags or membrane filters.
   b. Water disinfection and sedimentation. Initial disinfection through is done through chlorination. Then disinfection using UV lights (or ozone) did after the final filtration.
   c. Water conditioning. Through the use of activated charcoal filters and use of Ethylene Diamine Tetra Acetic Acid (EDTA) to chelate remaining heavy metals impurities.
2 Effluent Water Treatment Hatchery and Growout — All water discharged from the hatchery should be temporarily stored in a catching pond and treated with hypochlorite solution (>20 ppm active chlorine for not less than 60 minutes) or other effective disinfectant prior to discharge.
3 Physical Isolation — The different production facilities shall be physically isolated from one another specifically, maturation, spawning and hatching, larval and nursery rearing, indoor and outdoor algal culture and live food production.
4 Aeration — Air flow should be controlled between sections of the facility. Glass wool filters should be installed in the main aeration line servicing all sections.
5. Sanitation and Disinfection:
   a. Worker sanitation — washing bathing routines.
   b. Installation of foot baths and hand washing stations at entry into each separate culture area (all entrance points).
   c. Traffic flow control in sections within the facility — one way: entrance to exit areas.
   d. Control movement of potential disease carriers near the testing area.
   e. Disinfection of equipment and materials in multiple points of use.
   f. Restrict visitors.

The facility shall be exclusively used for the *P. vannamei* breeding and its fry production and that no other species should be reared in the facility.

g. **The following documents shall be presented for inspection at the port of entry by the importer/ broker of *P. vannamei* broodstock to FIQS and BoC personnel.**

1. Certificate of Compliance
2. Two (2) years disease-free status as certified by Competent Authority at the Federal or State level. Said certificate shall be accompanied by the number of broodstock submitted for examination and identification of organs/tissues where the DNA/RNA were extracted.
3. Disease History of Broodstock facility of origin
4. Laboratory results from USMSFP Reference Laboratory at the Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory, Department of Veterinary Science and Microbiology, University of Arizona. The results should indicating numbers of broodstock submitted for examination and identification of organs/tissues where the DNA/RNA were extracted.
5. Health Certificate from appropriate Country of Origin Competent Authority
6. Detailed travel documents.

Section 2. Shrimp Grow-out Facility Certification — The following measures shall be observed in certifying shrimp farms to culture *P. vannamei*:

a. **Creation and Composition of a Panel which will accredit *P. vannamei* grow-out farms. An accreditation panel for *P. vannamei* grow-out farms shall be created and shall consist of the following:**

1. Regional Director of the BFAR (or representative) where the grow-out farm to be accredited is located
2. Head of aquaculture division of the said BFAR Regional Office
3. Municipal fisheries officer or representative of the Municipal Agriculturist Office where the grow-out farm to be accredited is located.
4. One shrimp expert to be appointed by BFAR

b. **Accreditation Process for Grow-out Farms:**

1 All shrimp grow-out farms wanting to avail of shrimp fry from BFAR-accredited *P. vannamei* hatcheries and culture the same shall file an application with the BFAR Regional Offices for accreditation as recipient farms for the commercial culture the same, for traceability of shrimp produced under the program and ecompliance with international fisheries export standards.
2. The Panel shall conduct an ocular inspection of the proposed grow-out farm determine its location, area, facilities, its suitability for *P. vannamei* culture and the kind of culture system it can handle.
3. Farm Facilities. The proposed grow-out farm must be designed, situated and operated in such a manner that will prevent and minimize risk of escapes. It should be able to comply with the minimum requirement for basic farm facilities in accordance with the Good Aquaculture Practices (GAP) and the Code of Practices for Responsible Aquaculture and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

c. **Issuance of Farm Certification.**

The List of Shrimp Grow-out Farms which have complied with the requirements as provided in the Guidelines will be presented by the Panel to their respective BFAR Regional Directors for approval and issuance of FARM CERTIFICATION. Validation of certification shall be three (3) years and subject to regular evaluation to determine the compliance by the farm with the Guidelines. Duplicate copy of the Farm Certification shall be submitted to the BFAR Central Office as part of record-keeping.

d. **Shrimp Postlarval Source.**

Accredited grow-out farms should use only high health *P. vannamei* shrimp fry coming from shrimp hatcheries accredited by BFAR as provided for in Section II of this Guidelines. Upon reservation for postlarvae from the accredited hatcheries Shrimp Fry Source Certification (SFSC) shall be issued to the qualified shrimp grow-out farms, stating the following information:

1 Farm registration number
2 Farm operator
3 Farm location
4 Pond area
5 Stocking density
6 Stocking date

e. **Transport Requirement for the Produce.**

For the proper monitoring of the final shrimp product and in order to prevent final shrimp products coming from other sources from entering the market, processing plants, consignation and other outlets, farmers shall produce current Shrimp Fry Source Certification (SFSC) from the accredited hatcheries. Absence of the said Shrimp Fry Source Certification shall warrant confiscation of the final shrimp product.

f. **Record-Keeping Requirement.**

To establish product traceability, the following data shall be required to be recorded for each pond and every production cycle by the farm to be certified:

1. Pond identification number
2. Pond Area
3. Stocking date
4. Quantity of postlarvae stocked
5. Source of postlarvae (hatchery)
6. Antibiotic and drug use
7. Herbicide, algaecide and other pesticide use
8. Manufacturer and lot number for each feed used
9. Harvest date

The accredited hatcheries shall submit on regular basis the triplicate copy of the SFSC to their respective BFAR Regional Offices for record-keeping and counter-checking. The original copy shall be provided to the recipient grow-out farm and the duplicate copy shall be kept at the accredited hatcheries for record purposes.

Section 3. Other Factors In Both Hatchery And Grow-Out Farms — The following factors should be considered in the hatchery and grow-out farm facility:

a. **Outbreak and the Taura Syndrome Virus:**
   Any shrimp farm found positive for Taura Syndrome Virus (TSV) shall be quarantined. No shrimp or shrimp products shall be allowed to leave the farm. Pond riwater shall be treated with calcium hypochlorite to attain an active chlorine level of 100 ppm. The water shall be discharged only after three days to ensure that the active chlorine has dissipated and shall no longer pose a problem to the organisms in the receiving water.

b. **Printing of Documentation Materials.**
   All documentation materials shall be printed only at the BFAR Central Office with proper security features to prevent tampering. As added security, all Certificates issued to BFAR Regional Offices shall be properly coded for ease in traceability and accountability.

SECTION 4. Effectivity. — This order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and/or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and fifteen (15) days after its registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register.

ISSUED this 08 day of JAN, 2007 at Quezon City, Metropolitan Manila, Philippines.

ARTHUR C. YAP
Secretary

Recommended by:

MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.
Director
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

JESUS EMMANUEL M. PARAS
Undersecretary for Operations
Fisheries and Livestock
(concurrent Chairman NFARMC)

(PDI - January 10, 2007)

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

Pursuant to Section 1, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009) as amended, the public is hereby invited to the panel interview of the following candidates for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE of the SUPREME COURT** at the Old Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Supreme Court Building.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2007
9:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON

1. CRUZ, EDGARDO P.
2. DEVANADERA, AGNES VICENTA SALAYO T.
3. REYES, RUBEN T.

The other seven candidates, namely: **BARRIOS**, Roberto A.; **DE CASTRO**, Teresita L.; **HORMACHUELOS**, Portia A.; **NACHURA**, Antonio Eduardo B.; **ONG**, Gregory S.; **VASQUEZ**, Conrado M. Jr.; **VILLARUZ**, Francisco H. Jr. were already interviewed by the JBC in February 2006 for the same position.

January 9, 2007

(Sgd.) **MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA**
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI—Jan. 10, 2007)

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 4 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page B3 of the Business section mistakenly identified Dr. James G. Dy as the owner of the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center. Dy is the chair and president of the Philippine Chinese-Charitable Association Inc., which owns and operates the hospital.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 7 ISSUE, the Sunday Sports column of Beth Celis on Page A24—"Vargas pursues ambitious project"—erroneously stated that Quinito Henson is 66 years old. That is the age of singer Sir Cliff Richard.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 9 ISSUE, an article on Page A2—"Police arrest 'suicide bomber'"—mistakenly stated that bombing suspect, Ricardo Ayeras, was arrested along with Jay Perez and Abdul Mujib. Ayeras was arrested alone. The two other names mentioned are Areyas' aliases.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, an article on Page A3—"Dismiss media class suit, Mike A asks court"—mistakenly said that the three media organizations and 36 print journalists who filed a damage suit against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo had been sued by him for libel. Only a number of those who filed the damage suit had been sued for libel by Arroyo.

* * *

ON THE SAME PAGE, a headline—"China sends 1,800 tents for homeless in Bicol"—misstated the number of tents donated by China for the typhoon victims in Bicol. China donated 1,700 tents—not 1,800.

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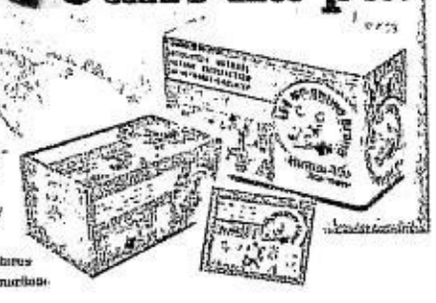

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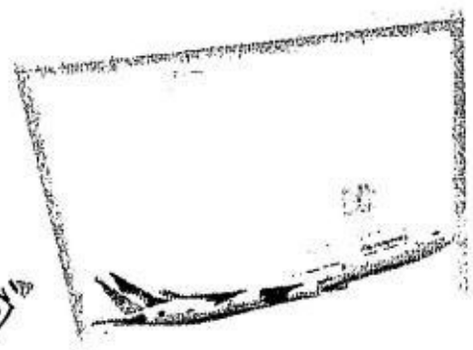

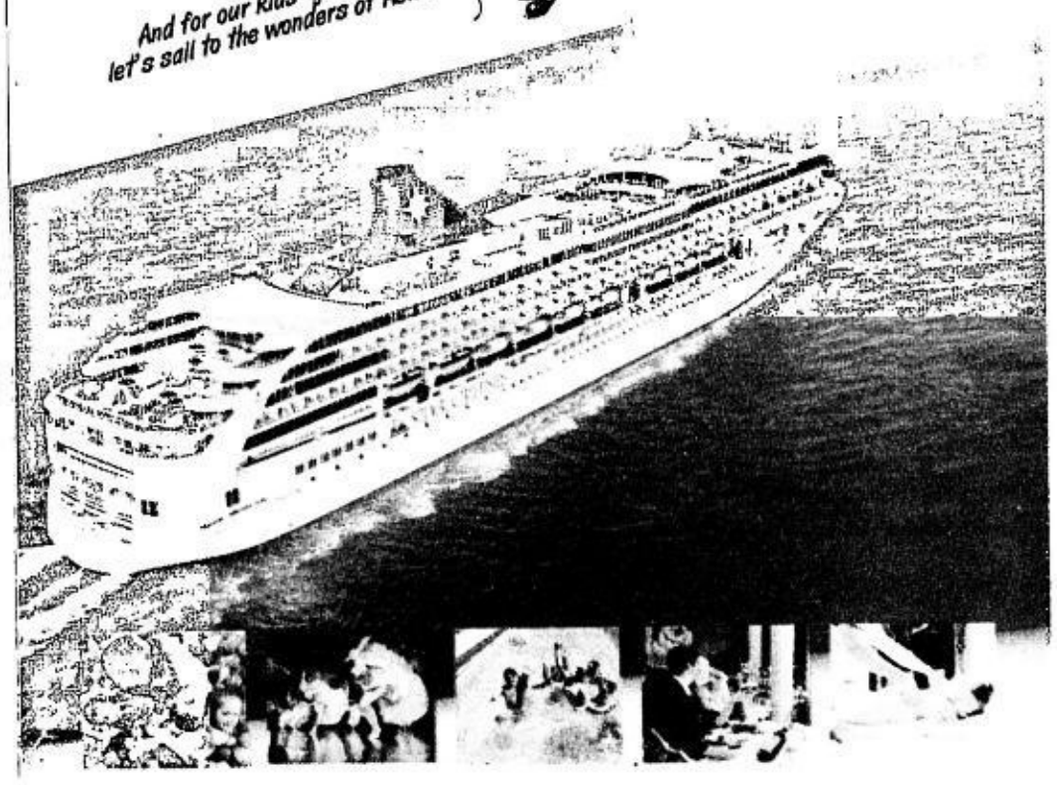

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Black Hawk up? US hits terror targets in Somalia

From page A1

remote island on the southern tip of Somalia, close to the Kenyan border, Somali officials said. The island and a site 250 kilometers north were hit.

It was the first overt military action by the US in Somalia since the 1990s and the legacy of a botched intervention—known as "Black Hawk Down"—that left 18 US servicemen dead. The US military said Tuesday it had sent an aircraft carrier to join three other US warships conducting antiterror operations off the Somali coast.

US warships have been seeking to capture al-Qaida members thought to be fleeing Somalia after Ethiopia invaded Dec. 24 in support of the government and have begun flying intelligence-gathering missions over Somalia.

Gov't support

President Abdullahi Yusuf told journalists in the capital, Mogadishu, that the US "has a right to bombard terrorist suspects who attacked its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania." Monday, Yusuf had entered the restive capital for the first time since his election.

Somalia has not had an effective central government since clan-based warlords toppled dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991 and then turned on each other, sinking the Horn of Africa nation of 7 million people into chaos.

At least 13 attempts at government have failed since then. The current government was established in 2004 with UN backing.

Anti-US sentiment

Deputy Prime Minister Hussein Aideed told The Associated Press the US had "our full support for the attacks."

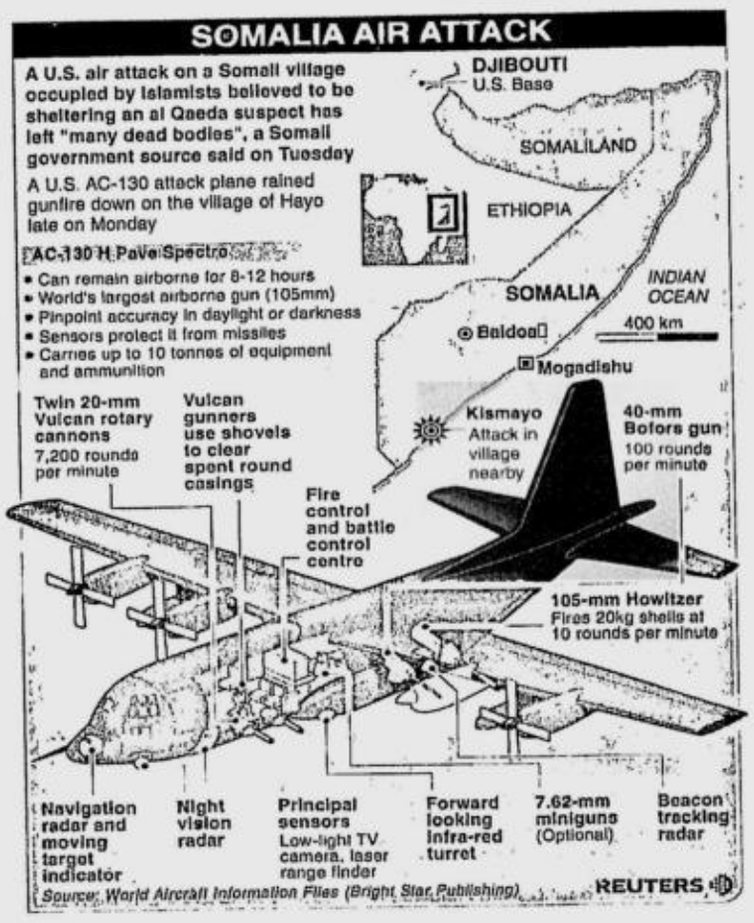
But others in the capital said the attacks would only increase anti-American sentiment in the largely Muslim country.

"US involvement in the fighting in our country is completely wrong," said Sahro Ahmed, a 37-year-old mother of five.

Already, many people in predominantly Muslim Somalia had resented the presence of troops from neighboring Ethiopia, which has a large Christian population and has fought two brutal wars with Somalia, most recently in 1977.

Ethiopian forces

Ethiopia forces had invaded Somalia to prevent an Islamic movement from ousting the weak, internationally recognized government from its lone stronghold in the west of the country. The US and Ethiopia both accuse the Islamic group of harboring extremists, among them al-Qaida suspects.



Ethiopian troops

Ethiopian troops, tanks and warplanes took just 10 days to drive the Islamic group from the capital, Mogadishu, and other key towns.

President Yusuf said the leaders of the Islamic movement "would not be forgiven" and that talks between the two rival sides were not an option.

One US attack took place on Monday afternoon on Badmadow island. The area is known as Ras Kamboni and is suspected to be a terror training base. Ethiopian and Somali troops had over the last days cornered the main Islamic force in Ras Kamboni, with US warships patrolling off shore and the Kenyan military guarding the border to watch for fleeing militants.

Civilian casualties

Witnesses said at least four civilians were killed in another attack 50 kilometers east of Afmadow town, including a small boy. The claims could not be independently verified.

"My 4-year-old boy was killed in the strike," Mohamed Mahmud Burale told the AP by telephone. "We also heard 14 massive explosions."

The AC-130, a four engine turboprop-driven aircraft, is armed with 40 mm cannon that fire 120 rounds per minute and a 105 mm cannon, normally a field artillery weapon. The plane's latest version, the AC-130U, known as "Spooky," also carries Gatling gun-type 20 mm cannon. The gunships were designed primarily for battlefield use to place saturated fire on massed troops.

"We don't know how many people were killed in the attack but we understand there were a lot of casualties," government spokesperson Abdirahman Dinari said. "Most were Islamic fighters."

Training camp

US officials said after the Sept. 11 attacks that extremists with ties to al-Qaida operated a training camp at Ras Kamboni and al-Qaida members are believed to have visited it. The alleged mastermind of the embassy bombings in East Africa, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, escaped to Ras Kamboni, according to testimony from one of the convicted bombers.

Mohammed is believed to be the leader of the al-Qaida East Africa cell.

Leaders of the Islamic movement have vowed from their hideouts to launch an Iraq-style guerrilla war in Somalia, and al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden's deputy has called on militants to carry out suicide attacks on the Ethiopian troops.

UN peacekeeping force

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana said he told UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Monday that a UN peacekeeping force may be needed to guarantee security and stability in Somalia. He said Ugandan forces may be the first deployed to replace Ethiopian troops.

Jendayi Frazer, the US assistant secretary of state for Africa, said Sunday that the United States would use its diplomatic and financial resources to support the government. The US has pledged $40 million in political, humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance. *AP*

RP peacekeepers dealt 'unkindest cut of all'

From page A1

strators opposing the continued UN presence in Haiti attacked UN personnel, wounding two members of the Philippine contingent.

The Philippine Mission to the UN in New York describes the latest incidents as the "worst outbreak of violence" directed against Filipino peacekeepers—or "Blue Helmets"—since the April 2005 attack that killed Batomalaque.

The security of Filipino peacekeeping contingents and military observers in Haiti and elsewhere has always figured high among the concerns of the Philippine mission. Since early last year, however, the Philippine mission has had to deal with another worry: The low morale and restiveness among many of the 329 military Blue Helmets stationed mainly in Haiti and Liberia.

For the first time since the Philippines began sending contingents abroad, Filipino peacekeepers are complaining. The object of their ire is the decision of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to slash their monthly allowance of $1,000 by as much as 40 percent.

DFA and DOJ not consulted

The AFP directive cutting troop allowances, unprecedented since the country resumed in 1991 the deployment of troops and police officers to UN peacekeeping missions, was issued without consulting the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of National Defense. It took effect in January 2006.

In a statement, the Philippine Mission to the UN said the pay cut covered only the peacekeepers from the AFP assigned to the Force Headquarters Security Units of the UN missions in Liberia and Haiti. Military officers assigned as military observers get their pay in full because the allowance they received are not coursed through the AFP. The Philippine National Police contingent—325 personnel in Liberia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan, East Timor and Ivory Coast—also gets full pay.

The Philippine mission said that when it learned of the pay cuts, "we recommended that the reductions be placed on hold and that the peacekeepers be paid in full." But with the resignation of Avelino Cruz as defense secretary last November, the matter remains hanging. Cruz had repeatedly assured the DFA he would try somehow to help.

The peacekeepers, who signed up for the dangerous UN missions to augment their meager pay, have also appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo through an open letter to restore their allowances to $1,000.

But the pay cuts are by no means the only issue government needs to urgently address when it comes to UN money it receives in exchange for sending troops to peacekeeping missions. A special team of government auditors found "highly questionable" certain transfers of the UN fund, projects and activities by the AFP done in the name of UN peacekeeping. The team also found signs of fraud in procurement deals, running into hundreds of millions of pesos, supposedly for the UN contingent. All these took place under the Arroyo administration.

These include charging the UN various expenses, such as fuel and helicopter repairs, that had already been charged to other AFP funds and money the government got from the United States for the RP-US Balikatan exercises, according to audit findings.

Audit team chief resigns

The special team, created by the Commission on Audit in October 2004, disbanded early this year after completing its investigation and presenting its findings to the Ombudsman for the military and top COA officials.

Shortly after, the team's leader, Auditor Heidi Mendoza, left public service in disgust after failing to get the COA's nod to further investigate the AFP, particularly the funds it obtains from the UN and the United States. Mendoza declined to be interviewed for this report.

The Philippines first participated in UN operations in 1951 when it deployed the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea. It did not join UN missions during the Marcos administration because it was focused on internal security concerns. In 1991 the country resumed contributing to UN operations, deploying the Blue Helmets to Iraq.

Second largest

As of Nov. 30, 2006, the Philippines had 672 military and police personnel deployed to seven UN peacekeeping operations worldwide. This makes it the second largest contributing country in Southeast Asia and the 27th in the world. Of the 672 peacekeepers, 329 are from the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Marines, and 325 from the Philippine National Police. The rest are military observers.

Under an agreement, the UN reimburses the AFP what it spends for personnel or troop allowances; contingent-owned equipment such as vehicles and generators; and "sustainment," including medical equipment and storage.

UN reimbursements

From 2001 to 2004 it released to the AFP a total of P1.47 billion, according to the auditors' report. In 2005, the military received P227.5 million in troop allowances, plus P23.6 million for equipment used in Liberia from December 2004 to September 2005, data from the Philippine mission in New York show. Reimbursements for equipment used in the Haiti mission are estimated at P28.9 million as of February 2006.

The reimbursements were deposited directly in a Land Bank of the Philippines account until 2002, when the AFP opened a savings account at the United Coconut Planters Bank's Alfaro branch in Makati. In May 2004 it opened another UN account at the UCPB's Salcedo branch, also in Makati.

P52-M discrepancy

The bank accounts themselves were problematic. The COA team uncovered transactions between May 20 and Aug. 17, 2004—involving P86.4 million in debit and P34.3 million in credit—"deleted" from the UCPB-Alfaro passbook the AFP had submitted for audit. The deletions, resulting in a P52-million discrepancy in the account balance, were detected when the team obtained a bank statement.

About P22 million of the "deleted" entries covered payments to 11 suppliers. Another entry purged from the Alfaro passbook pertained to P36 million moved on May 20, 2004 to the AFP's new account at UCPB—Salcedo and ended up as payments to mostly the same suppliers.

By the auditors' reckoning, a staggering P176.2 million transferred by the AFP to the Air Force, Navy and the Army's 51st and 54th Engineering Brigades from 2002 to 2005 and charged to releases from UN funds went to "questionable projects and activities." Of the amount, P94.3 million remained unliquidated at the time of the audit, with the Air Force accounting for P69 million or three-fourths of the sum.

Funds were transferred and disbursement vouchers drawn without documents that would validate the purpose for which fund transfers were being made, the auditors said. Money also went to activities totally unrelated to UN peacekeeping activities.

In a lot of instances, funds were actually used only after one year, sometimes two, following the transfers, "proving that at the time the transfer was made, there was no felt need," the auditors concluded.

Multiple charging of expenses

The COA team came upon nine checks amounting to P84.2 million issued between January 2002 and May 2004 to the 51st Engineering Brigade, "the purposes of which were unknown at the time of transfer." Only two other checks totaling P35 million stated the reasons: the phase and land developments of the AFP Peacekeeping Operation Center facilities.

A total of P120 million transferred to the Air Force from 2002 to 2005 for the repairs of at least six C130 helicopters at the 220th Airlift Wing particularly caught the audit team's attention. Most of these aircraft had either been repaired or were undergoing repair under the Depot Maintenance Program funded by the Joint US Military Assistance Group (Jusmag), it reported.

Records obtained by the auditors show, for example, that the C130 with tail number "4593" was inputted into the Jusmag program in February 2004. From March to September 2004, when the Air Force supposedly spent P5.9 million of UN money to fix it, Lockheed Martin was repairing the aircraft at the hangar of its local supplier—at Jusmag's expense.

Multiple charging of fuel expenses was also a practice. A separate audit of the Balikatan funds showed that the US had reimbursed the AFP about P9 million in fuel expenses supposedly incurred for the 2002 joint military exercises. The Philippine military, however, reported these very same expenses to the UN that same year and got reimbursed, according to audit findings.

US funds single account

The audit team questioned the AFP practice of depositing in a single bank account reimbursements from the United States and other fund transfers from government agencies such as the National Irrigation Administration and the Department of Public Works and Highways. "The multiple and material amount of funds for different purposes but kept in a single account proved to be a fertile ground for juggling and conversion of funds," it said.

Purchases of office supplies charged to UN reimbursements also struck auditors as being as "doubtful" as those bought using other funds at the AFP's disposal. The purchases have long been the objects of "conversion" in the military, which involves transforming allocated funds into cash, most commonly in collusion with suppliers and some of the officers involved in the procurement process in an AFP unit.

Even after the Government Procurement Reform Act or Republic Act No. 9184 came into force in 2003 and measures to reform the military procurement system were adopted, conversion and other questionable buying practices persist.

Rigged selection of suppliers

"Selection and award to suppliers (were) rigged, with participating suppliers owned by one and the same individual or group of individuals," the auditors said. "These are the same contractors who cornered transactions from (the AFP's) regular accounts, interest account, Balikatan and even Modernization funds," the audit team said.

The team found many suppliers lacking a specific product line: They would peddle office supplies at one time and render catering services at another. The AFP also bought medicines from suppliers without license from the Bureau of Food and Drugs.

The auditors disclosed that splitting of purchase orders, which enables officials to keep contracts within their signing authority, and awarding of contracts to suppliers even before any canvassing was made remained rampant practices in the military.

Account of same person

Curiously, checks paid to a minimum of four to six companies sometimes ended up being deposited in only one account. For example, those issued to Alvenru Enterprises, PHU Enterprises, Cherub Equipment Rental Services, ETHC Builders, CURM Enterprises and ILAMU Sales were deposited in the same bank account by the same person, Pacita H. Umali.

In the case of the Balikatan funds, the audit team said reimbursements of at least P31 million amounted to fund conversion. A number of transactions were "fictitious," with suppliers allowing the AFP use of their documents such as official receipts and delivery receipts for these, auditors said. Undated, antedated or postdated documents "lend to the bogus nature of these transactions," they added.

DFA officials in Manila and New York have yet to be apprised of the audit findings, but their attention has been drawn to alleged corruption in the military by Philippine troops in Haiti and Liberia complaining about the cuts in their monthly allowance of $1,000.

AFP justification

The AFP justified the reduction, citing the need to upgrade the country's peacekeeping capabilities by acquiring new equipment and funding the construction of the proposed training center in Capas, Tarlac. It said the uniform rates violated the principle of commensurate pay.

The AFP further said that the amount withheld from troop allowances would also help offset what it had spent to train peacekeepers. The AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center reported losses of as much as P4 million in sending a 145-member peacekeeping contingent overseas.

Under the directive approved by then Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga, officers serving in UN peacekeeping missions will receive allowances equivalent to 2.5 times their base pay while enlisted personnel will be entitled to allowances equivalent to three times their base pay. This means a full colonel with a monthly base pay of P19,499 will receive P48,747.50, and a corporal with a base pay of P9,668 will get P29,004.

Carton boxes as beds

Filipino peacekeepers said, however, they are skeptical that the proceeds of the new revenue-generating scheme will go to their intended purpose.

The Philippines has been reimbursed nearly $7 million or P357.8 million from the UN since 2000 for equipment used and "sustainment" of troops posted in East Timor and Liberia. But some reports said the AFP was unable to provide spare parts for some equipment, which were described as "aging."

Although they have night-vision capability, some of the heavy equipment deployed were Vietnam-vintage surplus trucks turned over by the United States, according to peacekeepers.

Some of those deployed to Liberia recalled what it was like when they first arrived at the post: They turned carton boxes into beddings and bought their own blankets.

The Blue Helmets also said the AFP at first issued them duffel bags originally intended for trainees, and not the extendable deployment bags suited for their mission. The deployment bags were later sent to them but these, they said, were the same supplies the Army Support Command had allegedly rejected because they were below standard.

Eat-all-you-can sardines

In January 2005, peacekeepers in Haiti nearly staged a mutiny after being made to subsist on sardines for two straight months. "It was eat-all-you-can sardines—tomato sauce, or olive oil, spicy, not too spicy," a member of the contingent said.

Data from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations show that troop contributing countries like the Philippines are actually paid $1,028 for every peacekeeper. Even before Senga issued his directive, the AFP had been automatically withholding $28 to offset the cost of vaccination and other deployment-related administrative expenses, leaving only $1,000 for each soldier.

Baja: Stop pay cuts

In a memorandum to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Ambassador Lauro Baja, head of the Philippine Mission to the UN, sought the suspension of the pay cuts. Romulo, in turn, relayed Baja's recommendation to then Defense Secretary Cruz through a confidential memorandum.

"Our peacekeepers have brought pride and honor to our country. The controversy generated by the recent pay cuts may create the misimpression that the Philippines is exploiting the troops it sends on peacekeeping assignments," Baja said. "It erodes some of [the] respect and goodwill we were able to establish in the United Nations."

Supplier asks SC to lift textbook TRO

By Armand N. Nocum

A TEXTBOOK SUPPLIER HAS ASKED THE Supreme Court to stop several publishing firms from distributing some 12 million World Bank-funded textbooks to public schools, saying the bidding of the P2-billion ($40 million) deal was flawed.

In a 109-page comment filed before the high court, Kolonwel Trading asked the court to immediately lift the temporary restraining order (TRO) it issued last month against a Manila Regional Trial Court judge who stopped the implementation of the questionable contract.

The delivery of the textbooks was supposed to start last Nov. 20, 2006 but an injunction issued by a Manila Regional Trial Court kept the books locked in several warehouses.

"By issuing a restraining order ... the Supreme Court is paving the way for the consummation of the contract even before the tribunal hears the side of the respondent," Kolonwel's lawyers said.

Piatco-type fiasco

"If the contract is eventually declared null and void, it would lead to another Piatco or Mega Pacific-type of fiasco, where government will have to go through long and tedious litigation to recover money lost," warned lawyer Joel Ruiz Butuyan in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

He said the new textbooks had printing and binding errors, "such as pages that were upside down."

Lawyers Butuyan and Christopher Bolastig, representing Kolonwel, earlier won a final injunction against the multimillion deal in a case filed against the Department of Budget and Management-Procurement Service (DBM-PS), the Inter-Agency Bids and Awards Committee (IABAC) of the Department of Education (DepEd) and private respondents Vibal Publishing House, SD Publications Inc., LG&M Corp., Watana Phanit Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd and Alkem Co. Pte. Ltd.

Manila RTC Judge Myra Garcia-Fernandez, ruled last Dec. 4 that there was basis to prevent the government from bidding out the textbook contract to the Vibal consortium, pointing out that Kolonwel was the lowest bidder.

Error-filled books

In its urgent motion to lift the Supreme Court's TRO, Kolonwel lawyers also warned that the deal would only "reward" book firms that should have been punished with disqualification from government book-supply deals for their role in the proliferation of error-filled textbooks in the past.

"If there is any 'unnecessary suffering' that school children are being made to endure these days, it is the grievously erroneous textbooks previously supplied by the (Vibal) consortium of companies," the Kolonwel lawyers said in their Jan. 2 comment.

The lawyers cited newspaper reports quoting school supervisor Antonio Go as claiming there were 431 errors in Vibal's second year high school textbook "Asya: Noon, Ngayon at sa Hinaharap."

And with the new deal, they said "the Vibal consortium is now being rewarded with participation in a new book procurement project that is intended to replace, among others, the error-filled textbooks that they previously supplied to the (Department of Education)."

To give these publishers, again, "participation in contracts to replace their own error-filled textbooks is the height of injustice," Kolonwel said.

World Bank-funded

The textbook acquisition program is partially funded by the World Bank under its Second Social Expenditure Management Program (SEMP2) loan agreement and the Asian Development Bank through its Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) loan agreement.

According to the lawyers, Kolonwel was among the 18 firms that joined the bidding for the purchase of 17.5 million copies of Social Studies textbooks and teachers' manual for elementary and high school in the country.

Of the 18 initial prospective bidders, only 11 publishing firms, including Kolonwel and Vibal, submitted their respective proposals on Dec. 9, 2005. But on Sept. 12, 2006, DBM-PS entered into a purchaser-supplier contract with Vibal and Watana, prompting Kolonwel to question the agreement.

'No pressure, just advocacy'

DOES THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S PRESSURE have to do with the Arroyo administration's supposedly weak policy on population?

As far as the head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines is concerned, it's not pressure, but a "strong advocacy" against government efforts that threaten life and the Filipino family.

"We have a strong advocacy which shows whenever there are bills in Congress concerning life and family," Archbishop Angel Lagdameo yesterday told the INQUIRER during a break at the 2007 International Conference on Bioethics and the Family at the Shangri-la Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

"Our advocates, including lay people, are always there and I am happy that they are doing their role."

Lagdameo was reacting to oft-repeated criticisms that the Catholic Church was bullying the government into scrapping policies intended to drastically reduce the population.

One of them came not long ago from former President Fidel Ramos, a Protestant.

In a keynote address at a population management forum, Ramos said the Arroyo administration's population policy "has been generally described as flip-flopping, perhaps due to unwarranted subservience to the Catholic Church."

If the administration seemed to be toeing the line of the Catholic Church, Lagdameo said it was probably because the government was also promoting natural family planning methods.

Some critics also claimed that the Church's strict policy against population control, guided by the 1968 encyclical "Humanae Vitae," was inadvertently abetting poverty.

But Lagdameo said it was wrong to blame poverty, which seemed to be everywhere in the Philippines, on population growth.

Ramos earlier claimed that at the "present" growth rate of 2.36 percent, the country's population could balloon to 100 million in the next five or six years. *Christian V. Esguerra*

Tanker with 16 Pinoys collides with US sub

TOKYO—A US NUclear submarine and a Japanese tanker collided in the Arabian Sea, but there were no injuries or oil leaks, officials at the tanker's owner said on Tuesday. *(See story on page A21)*

The collision occurred around 1915 GMT on Monday (3:15 a.m. Tuesday in Manila), they said.

The tanker had eight Japanese and 16 Philippine crew members.

A Japanese Defense Ministry spokesperson said it was investigating the incident, which involved a ship belonging to Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd. carrying oil for Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K.

A Kawasaki Kisen spokesperson said there had been no injuries and no oil leaked from the vessel. *Reuters*

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Temporary water interruption in Quezon City, San Juan and Mandaluyong needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is currently upgrading its distribution lines and facilities to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. We regret that we will have to temporarily interrupt water supply in portions of Quezon City, San Juan and Mandaluyong City starting 10:00 p.m., Thursday, January 11, 2007, up to 6:00 a.m., Friday, January 12, due to the interconnection of mainlines.

The following areas will be affected: Barangays Horseshoe, Valencia and Balong Bato in Quezon City; Corazon De Jesus, Pasadena, Marianas, Wack Wack and North Greenhills in San Juan and Barangays Plainview, Addition Hills, San Jose, Mauway, Paraiso and Balong Bato in Mandaluyong City.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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(PDI – Jan. 10, 2007)

Postponement a blessing for Cebu

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CEBU CITY—THE POSTPONEMENT of the Asian regional summit last month may have been a big letdown, but it appears to be turning into a blessing for the province.

Francis O. Monera, president of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce, said in an interview the rescheduling gave the province double the exposure among international investors such as those from India.

In a statement, summit organizers said the 10-member Indian delegation, which included private sector representatives, did not leave immediately after the deferment was announced last December.

Instead, the Indian business group toured the Mactan Export Processing Zone and, "impressed by what they saw, two of them decided to invest" in the ecozone.

He believes the Indians' move was likely to be replicated several times over as businessmen of the other Asean member-countries and dialogue partners were introduced to the prospects of investing in the country through the weeklong gathering.

Monera said he was not personally aware of this but added that he would not be surprised if it happened. "(The chamber) has been very active in promoting the province abroad, especially in attracting business activities in information and communication technology and tourism," he said.

Monera said his group had sent a trade and investment mission to Bangalore two years ago, where Cebu businessmen had the opportunity to learn from their counterparts and explore possible tie-ups.

"Whatever investor interest that Cebu is attracting, it is a result of all that we have been doing with the help of the local government," Monera said. "But the hosting of the Asean summit gives our efforts a bigger wave that we could ride even after the meetings are long over."

He said the chamber planned to coordinate with counterpart organizations and business sectors in Asean to organize and formalize a yearly regional forum on the ICT sector.

Promotional initiatives

The chamber has taken up initiatives to promote the province independently as an alternative destination for outsourcing investments amid a trend among ICT-enabled service providers to locate outside Metro Manila.

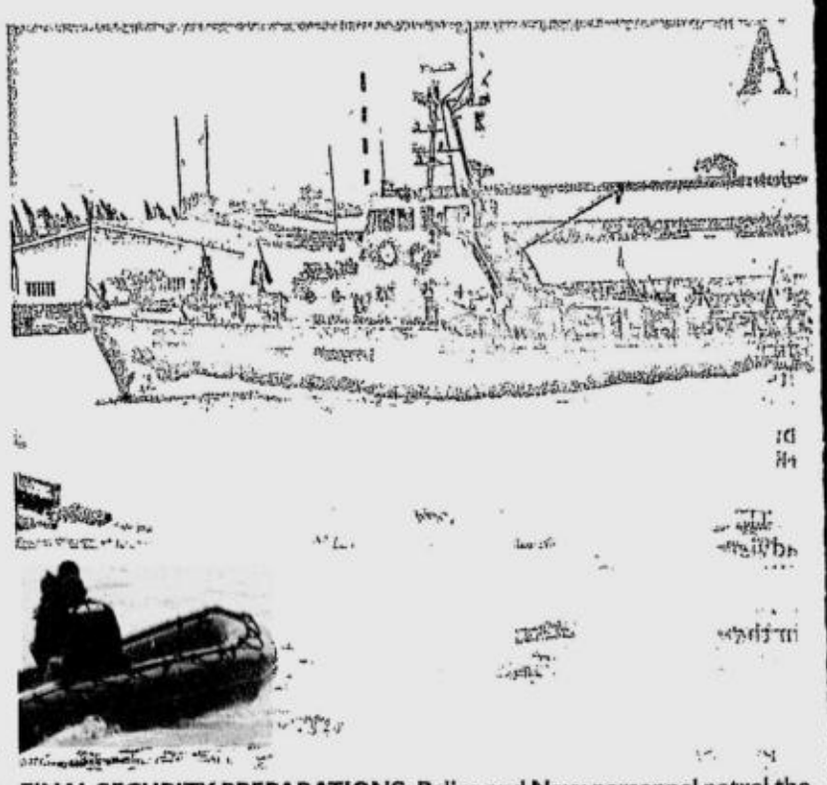
"If we could clinch this, we maybe able to arrange for the first regional ICT forum to be held here in Cebu," Monera said.

Also, Monera said his group was scheduled last December to sign an agreement on strengthening ties with the New Delhi-based Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

"We hope to be able to arrange for the signing to push through this time," he said.

Foreign Assistant Secretary Luis Cruz said the Indian businessmen proceeded to the MEPZ following last month's Asean business and investment summit.

"Right then and there, two of the businessmen who are engaged in the ICT industry decided to invest in Cebu," Cruz said.



FINAL SECURITY PREPARATIONS: Police and Navy personnel patrol the waters close to the international convention center in Cebu, venue of the 12th Asean summit starting Jan. 13. AFP

Asean to push f protection of m

CEBU CITY—SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS WIL push for better pay and working conditions for million of migrant workers from the region when they meet thi week for an annual meeting in Cebu.

The Philippines, which holds the rotating chairmanship of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, wants to emphasize social development at the group's summit and plans to unveil a roadmap for creating a "community of caring societies."

Indonesia, the Philippines and poorer members of Asean such as Laos, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar) and Vietnam are among the region's biggest labor exporters, sending peopl abroad to work as maids, builders, factory workers and manual laborers.

Asean members Brunei, Malaysia and Singapor host migrant workers, who often face exploitatio by employers and employment agencies. Rape an physical abuse are also a common problem.

The proposed declaration calls for equal wage and employment conditions for migrant workers, a well as decent housing and protection from illega recruitment, trafficking and prostitution.

According to documents seen by Reuters, one o

Nuns pray for sun

From page A1

bombing plots expectedly dominated the briefing, a sig that those twin downers would cast a long shadow ove the remaining summit activities running till Jan. 15.

A dinner meeting of the Asean Standing Commit tee was to be held last night, while senior official and ministers begin discussions today up to th 12th. The Asean Summit proper and the 2nd Eas Asia Summit will be from Jan. 13 to 15.

Of the 90-plus meetings making up this year summit calendar, 52 had already been complete when the event was abruptly deferred last Dec. 6 two days before the leaders were to arrive.

The weather had become such a pressing subje that Ambassador Marciano Paynor, head of the natio al organizing committee, said more than 500 umbre las had been procured for the delegates, just in case.

Told of a weather bureau bulletin indicating tha the province may be in for some rain brought abo by an inter-tropical convergence zone, Paynor sai that sort of forecast was unlike last December's co ditions, when Typhoon "Seniang" had a "70-perce chance" of hitting Cebu.

2 truckloads of eggs

With Garcia seated next to him, Paynor reporte that the governor had also sent "two truckloads eggs" as "offering" at convents run by Cebu-base nuns who could help pray for clear skies.

But in an interview later, a smiling Garcia said Payn simply said that "egg" part in jest. True, Garcia said, s had gone to see the Carmelites, the Pink Sisters, and t Poor Clare Nuns to beseech their mediation—but s gifted them with bags of groceries, not eggs.

In the evening, a light rain fell, but it certainly wasn't because the governor merely sent a letter o petition and bags of groceries to the nuns and didn actually show up in the convents to pray but because of bad weather, she later told reporters.

Garcia said the one-month respite allowed her administration to further fix or beautify the venue and ceremonial routes, including the P500-million Cebu International Convention Center.

Hastily constructed for the December staging, po tions of CICC's roof, particularly at the main entran driveway, leaked heavily during a heavy downpou day after the postponement was announced.

Leaks plugged

But according to its chief architect, Manuel Gua zon, workmen have since applied some 16,000 l ear feet of sealant on the problematic deck.

"All buildings after construction will first ha some leaks," said Guanzon, who said among his sa isfied clients have been business taipans Jo Gokongwei and George Ty.

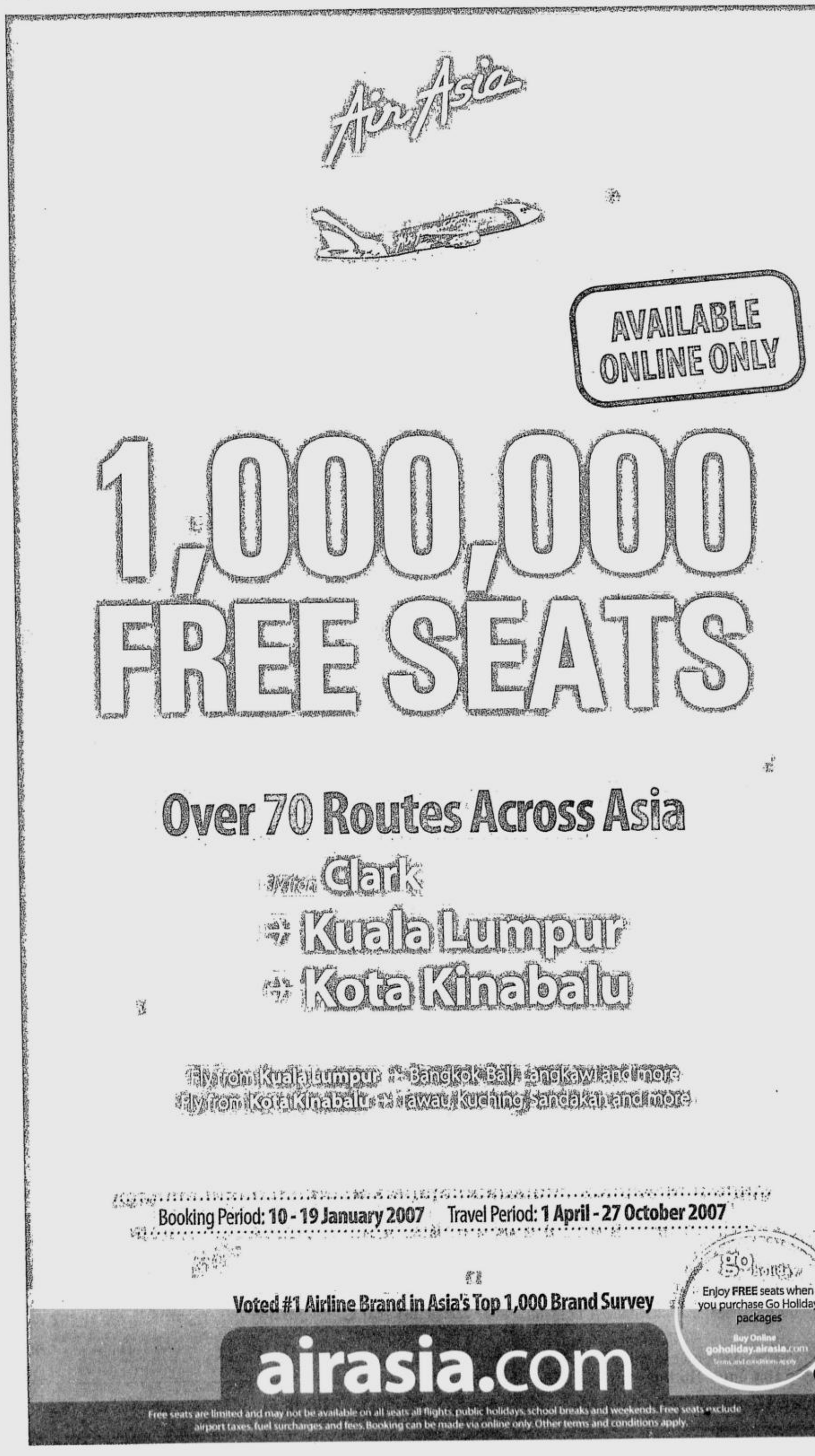
Asian leaders to wea

From page A1

ciation of Southeast Asian Nations.

"We weave our own silk and pineapple fab Goulbourn told Reuters in an interview at her s in Manila. "Even the button was mother of pearl

The Filipino designer, who has dressed w leaders such as Bill Clinton and Nelson Mand said the heads of state would be wearing three of customized shirts, including two short-slee designs made from linen and banana fiber.



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Aussie PM coming despite travel warning from Down Under

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER John Howard will attend the East Asia summit in the Philippines next week despite warnings of terror attacks, his spokesperson said in Sydney yesterday.

Howard's own government has in place a travel advisory warning its citizens against visiting Cebu, where the summit will be held, but the prime minister will fly there on Sunday, the spokesperson told AFP.

The travel advisory strongly advises Australians to avoid travelling to Cebu, saying "recent information suggests terrorists are in the final stages of planning attacks."

In Davao City, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. dismissed the Australian travel advisory. "We have not monitored concrete plans of terrorists to carry out attacks in Cebu," Esperon told reporters.

Security improved

"While we cannot guarantee that terror groups will not carry out their activities, we have deployed our troops to counter them," Esperon said. "When the Asean summit was called off in December, we did not pull out our troops from Cebu and the lull allowed us to improve on our security plans."

A force of 12,000 military and Philippine National Police personnel has been mobilized to secure the Cebu summit, officials have said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo assured Asian leaders Monday that security was in place to prevent attacks during a series of meetings which kicks off this week with a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"As we face the Asean summit, we would like to assure all our allies in East Asia and beyond that the Filipino soldiery and people are on watch every hour of the day, determined to do their share to defeat terror for a more secure and safer world," she said.

Ms Arroyo's statement came after troops killed six Abu Sayyaf and an al-Qaida-linked militant in a clash in Tawi-Tawi *AFP, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Dennis Jay C. Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*

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the agreements being worked on included meting out tougher penalties for human traffickers.

The Philippines is one of the world's biggest exporters of labor with over 8 million Filipinos, around 10 percent of the country's estimated 87 million population, working overseas.

"This is one issue that's very close to our hearts," said one Filipino diplomat.

Another diplomat said some Asean members, who import foreign labor, were stalling the agreement because they did not want to encourage large waves of migration.

But Luis Cruz, Manila's director general for Asean, said he was confident consensus would be reached. "It's the only and last outcome document to be adopted," he said.

The leaders would also agree to help migrant workers from any Asean member-state that may be caught in conflict outside the region, recalling difficulties in repatriating workers from Lebanon last year.

Cruz said leaders were also expected to adopt agreements on counterterrorism, regional trade, social cohesion and drafting a constitution for the bloc. An agreement on energy security would also be signed among 16 Asian leaders, he added. *Reuters*

to shine on Cebu

Like the governor, the architect said his latest creation benefited from the postponement, with more meeting rooms now ready for use, including the special "GMA Room" which was reserved as President Macapagal-Arroyo's dressing area.

Fountains and pools that were not originally part of his design had been added, Garcia noted.

Gen. Leo Alvez, assistant secretary general for security of the Asean Summit, said local police had been reinforced, especially since Cebu is holding the Sinulog, a crowd-drawing religious festival, a few days after the summit. *(See story in Metro, Page A19)*

Alvez also cited the installation of surveillance cameras particularly on the major roads to be used for moving Asean VIPs, placing, at least for a few days, this predominantly low-rise metropolis under a high-tech security dragnet. In all, 41 cameras have been installed in Metro Cebu.

Brand-new limousines

As final security preparations were made, brand-new limousines that will ferry 16 heads of state rolled out of government depots in Cebu yesterday.

With police cars and outrider escorts' sirens blaring, dozens of the luxury cars stopped mid-morning traffic as security officials traversed main roads between major venue sites and hotels to be used for the meetings. A police rescue helicopter flew low overhead.

A second dry run was scheduled late yesterday before the ministers of Asean members Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam as well as those of regional trading partners Australia China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand arrive, Billones added.

Foreign and trade ministers will start arriving on Wednesday, while the leaders begin flying in on Thursday, officials said.

"We're doing this to make sure everything will be okay," said Roberto Capco, a senior aide to President Arroyo.

As the first of the convoys arrived, workmen stopped painting colorful Mondrian-style rectangular patterns on the driveway in front of the main entrance and stacked their pails of paint in a pile.

Work on all venues done

Capco described the repaint job as cosmetics, insisting that the main repair work had been done. "Work on all the venues have been completed. What is important is all the people expected are here," he told Agence France Presse.

He described the hosts' feelings as "like somebody expecting his wife to give birth to a baby." Australia, Britain and Canada still have travel warnings issued on Cebu, citing possible terrorist attacks, but the government said there were no valid threats to the summit.

ur pineapple ...

Goulbourn, who also dressed leaders during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Manila in 1996, said President Macapagal-Arroyo and New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark would be wearing more intricate designs.

Embroiderers spent days sewing a village life scene onto the shirts to symbolize the summit's theme of "One Caring and Sharing Community."

The silk and pineapple shirts cost P18,000 each but Goulbourn said they would last 10 years. *Reuters*

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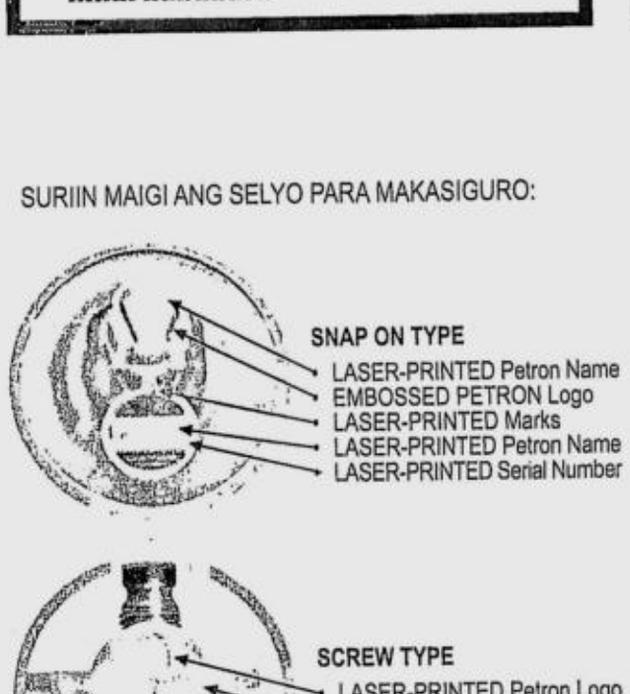

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Containment

OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS GUTIERREZ TOLD Congress in October last year that her office would resolve the plunder cases against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante some time this year. Three months later, she has fulfilled one-half of her pledge by ordering the filing of graft charges against Perez. Or has she really?

EDITORIAL

In December 2002, Mark Jimenez, who was then representing Manila's sixth district in Congress, accused Perez of plunder for allegedly forcing him to cough up $2 million. Jimenez said the justice secretary wanted the money in exchange for easing up the pressure the latter was exerting on the lawmaker to execute affidavits damaging to the cronies of ousted President Joseph Estrada. Earlier Jimenez said Perez demanded the payoff so that the new Arroyo administration would give the green light to the Argentine firm Industrias Metallurgicas Perscarmona Sociedad Anonima (Impsa) for the rehabilitation and operation of a power plant in Laguna.

Whatever the reason for the payoff, the Office of the Ombudsman has found enough evidence to finally bring the case to court. Gutierrez said investigators have uncovered a paper trail supporting Jimenez's claim that the payoff had been made, including bank records in Hong Kong and Geneva. On the other hand, Perez and his co-conspirators could not provide proof that the money was in payment for a legitimate real estate transaction. "It pains me, but I have to apply the law," said Gutierrez who recalled that she had served as justice undersecretary under Perez.

So, has the government's chief anti-graft prosecutor gathered the resolve to reel in some big fish? Is Gutierrez finally living up to her pledge to follow any trail of corruption even if it leads to Malacañang, as she had said in relation to the P720-million fertilizer scam?

One could not think of a better wish for the ombudsman and the nation for the new year than that she would finally do what she has been sworn to do as she appears to be doing in the Perez case. But before anyone begins sending out words of congratulations, a few questions need to be answered by the ombudsman.

First, why are Perez and his co-conspirators not being charged with plunder? Even now, when one dollar brings in less than P49, $2 million is still worth almost double the P50 million in illegal wealth a public official must amass in order to be charged with plunder.

RA 7080 says that any public official who amasses ill-gotten wealth amounting to P75 million (later reduced to P50 million by RA 7659) "through a combination or series of overt or criminal acts" is guilty of plunder. Mark Jalandoni, an assistant ombudsman, has been quoted as saying that Perez et al. could not be charged with plunder since the $2-million payoff constituted a single incident. What Jalandoni is saying—and his boss obviously agrees—is that Perez had to demand and accept the bribe in at least two installments to be guilty of plunder. In other words, an official who steals P50 billion in one blow commits a lesser crime than one who steals P50 million in a series of illegal transactions in the eyes of the law.

If the anti-graft prosecutors really believe a person has to commit a combination of criminal acts before he can be accused of plunder, they have all those, in the charge sheet they are preparing. Graft, extortion and falsification of public documents—the very charges they are bringing against Perez et al.—cannot be construed as a single act.

Such a cockeyed view of the law only tends to confirm suspicions that the anti-graft agency does not really want to see Perez behind bars. And why? Because if he is sent to prison, he could start singing and drag some very important persons there, too.

And that is the last thing the Office of the Ombudsman apparently wants. It bears noting that Jalandoni was careful to point out that the charges they would file against Perez have nothing to do with the Impsa contract. Meaning, the case would begin and end with Perez and those who cooperated with him in laundering the money. For the Ombudsman and the Arroyo administration, containment is the name of the game.

The question is: Will Perez just play along?

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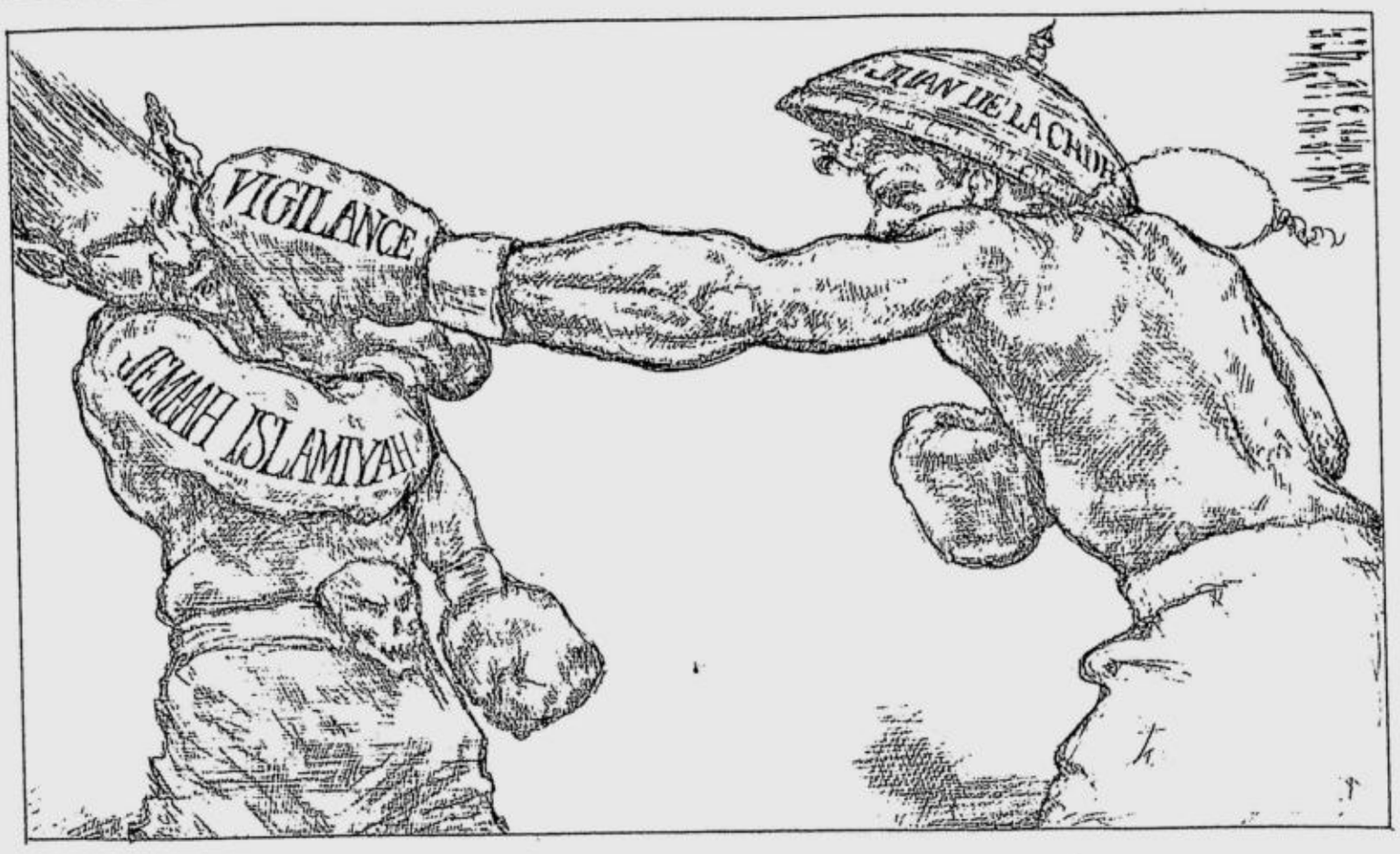

The opposition senatorial ticket

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE RESIGNATION OF UNDERSECRETARY Zosimo Paredes of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement is only the latest of many resignations from the Arroyo administration. Only the wrong people are resigning from the administration; the person whom two-thirds of the Filipino people want very much to resign does not want to leave Malacañang.

Sa totoo lang, do you know that many of the nation's troubles will be solved and the nation will immediately become more stable if this person resigns? Her clinging on to her position only exacerbates the problems. If she truly loved her country—and her place in history—she would show true statesmanship and solve these problems by leaving.

* * *

The United Opposition (UNO) is finalizing its senatorial slate. San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, son of former President Estrada, the moving force behind UNO, said that one criterion for inclusion in the slate is that the candidate should be "anti-Cha-cha and anti-GMA." May I suggest: the candidate should also be "pro-impeachment."

I think that our No. 1 problem is that the people believe they have a fake President—not only once but twice. The first time was when she grabbed the presidency, with the help of the Davide Court, through the decision mentioned in the previous column. The second time was when the presidency was stolen from the candidate who won it—Fernando Poe Jr.

Charter change and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's legitimacy should be made the primary issues in the coming elections. The election results will then clearly show whether the people still want GMA. And I think the reason people so abhor the postponement of elections is that they want to show—through their votes in the polls—how they feel about their current officials.

* * *

From JV's statements, I think, however, that the ticket of the UNO (which is supposed to be a coalition of opposition parties) is in danger of becoming the personal ticket of Erap. Some of those mentioned as likely to be included in the Senate slate are personal friends of Erap. Yes, they are anti-Cha-cha and anti-GMA and, most likely, pro-impeachment, but their performances were disappointing.

I am referring to former Senators Tito Sotto, Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Gringo Honasan.

The opposition itself claims there are too many aspirants for its Senate slate and that it is having a difficult time trimming it down to 12. I am sure that there are many other aspirants who are also anti-Cha-cha, anti-GMA and pro-impeachment.

Another danger for the upcoming opposition ticket is that it may become a vehicle to propagate family dynasties which are prohibited by the present Constitution. I am sure that one of the issues that would be thrown against the administration is that it has violated the Constitution many times. But how can the opposition make that accusation stick when it is also violating the Constitution?

Any way you look at it, it doesn't look nice for two brothers, or a brother and a sister, to be sitting in the same Senate, as if the opposition cannot find enough candidates to put there. It wasn't nice to put a mother and son (Senators Loi Ejercito and Jinggoy Estrada) in the same Senate; and it wouldn't be nice to put brothers Jinggoy and JV in the same Senate. Neither wouldn't it be nice to put brother Alan Peter Cayetano beside her sister Pia in the same Senate. Can't these two siblings wait three years to get into the Senate?

And what about putting another Aquilino Pimentel Jr. to replace the original Aquilino Pimentel in the Senate? I am referring, of course, to lawyer Koko Pimentel, who will be running in lieu of his father who is finishing his last term in the Senate. Koko is immensely qualified, being a bar topnotcher besides having the DNA of his father coursing through his veins. Moreover, he won't be sitting in the Senate with his illustrious father, who is stepping down this year, unlike the two other siblings mentioned above. Still, it looks like we have a monarchy with the crowns and titles being handed down to members of political families.

Still another dynasty member is Rep. Noynoy Aquino. Yes, he is the son of former President Corazon Aquino and martyr Ninoy Aquino—and the brother of (ugh) Kris—but what has he done in the House? Is he being included in the ticket because of an excellent performance as congressman or merely because he is the son of Ninoy and Cory?

This Erap ticket should be praised, however, for having former Vice President and Senator Teofisto Guingona in it. The irony here is that it was Guingona who demanded the resignation of Erap in his "I accuse" speech that started the concerted efforts to oust Erap from the presidency. Now Erap himself has forgotten his hurts and the past by choosing Guingona to lead the UNO ticket. That is statesmanship.

If old man Erap himself is willing to make sacrifices, shouldn't son JV do the same and step aside to give others a berth? Ditto for the others. Three years is a short time to wait. JV will win reelection as San Juan mayor against anybody hands down.

Loren Legarda, the unproclaimed vice president, a proven vote-getter and topnotcher in senatorial elections, is an excellent choice. So are Senators Ping Lacson, Manny Villar, Ralph Recto, Francis Pangilinan, Joker Arroyo and Rep. Chiz Escudero.

Honorable

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SENATORS JOKER ARROYO AND MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago are all praises for Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes who has just resigned from government.

Says Joker: "He resigns, it's accepted because he could not agree with Malacañang. That's an honorable course for him to take. That should serve as an example to officialdom."

Says Miriam: "That's good. That's the honorable thing to do. If his conscience does not allow him to toe the administration line, he will simply be able to get out of government because he's an appointive government official."

What's wrong with all that?

It's faint praise.

None of it draws any attention to **why** Paredes resigned. It draws attention only to form and not to content. And form in its good-manners-and-right-conduct sense: It's good form to resign when you're in disagreement with your boss. Other officials should emulate the example because it is good etiquette and not because it is righteous conduct.

At the very least, I don't know why Santiago should be pontificating about anything that has to do with the Visiting Forces Agreement. If I recall right, she was the one who argued for its being deemed a treaty notwithstanding that it was approved only by our Senate but not the United States. All this while in servitude to Erap who was under pressure to have it passed. She seems to have found a new master. Frankly, I don't know how Santiago has managed to pass herself off as an expert in international law, which is neither borne out by her academic credentials nor her pronouncements on pretty much anything, let alone the law. Certainly her grade in the bar exam does not commend it.

If it were merely a question of changing the color of the curtains in a room in the presidential palace, which currently houses a squatter, I can believe that it is good form to resign when an undersecretary prefers it to be restful green while his boss wants it to be flaming red. Aesthetic outrage is as much a good reason to resign as anything else, probably more so. Indeed, even if it were a question of deciding whether relief goods should be sent to Bicol or the Visayas first, I can believe that it is good form to resign when the undersecretary favors Bicol because he is a Bicolano and his boss wants the Visayas because it is more voter-friendly. Having differences in priorities qualifies as a reason to resign, even if their warped premises in this case suck.

Paredes' resignation is not of that middling order. This is not just a case of an official resigning because he disagrees with his boss, this is a case of an official resigning because he discovers his boss is a crook. Though why it took Paredes this long to discover his boss was one—metaphorically and "Garcistically"—only he can say. No matter, let us give credit where credit is due. Paredes resigned because he took violent exception to Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith being whisked out of Jejomar Binay's favorite jail, charging the executive—read, GMA—with taking the law into its own hands. That is not a difference in opinion between an official and his boss, that is a difference between right and wrong.

Paredes' resignation is worthy of emulation by other officials not just because it shows good form but because it shows good judgment; not just because it shows good manners but because it shows basic decency. It is not an act of protocol, it is an act of protest. It indicts wrongdoing to high heavens, notably this occupation government's predilection not just for abusing power but for taking power that does not belong to it. It demands to know: Where is GMA's right to defy the courts? Indeed it reminds us of what we've always demanded to know: Where is GMA's right to call up Garci?

I am glad, quite incidentally, that "Nicole" has called for the abolition of the VFA. If the VFA allows convicted American rapists in the Philippines to be rescued by America, then the solution is to scrap the VFA. It has no right to exist. Justifying Smith's departure as called for by the VFA is not unlike justifying molesting a female co-worker during office hours because one was drunk at the time. The justification is totally unjustifiable. Review the VFA? What for? Here and now we have all the proof we need that we need it like a hole in the head, or like an exercise in self-flagellation outside of Good Friday.

But to go back: It is a brave thing Paredes has done. I can imagine how hard it must have been for him to have made that decision given that times are hard and jobs do not come as plentifully as rain in July. Particularly for people with principle. Easy enough for those without one, they can always join government, or refuse to resign even when the world calls upon them to. Santiago should really stop talking about the honorableness of public officials resigning when they have differences with their bosses. That she once served Erap and is now serving Gloria suggests the concept escapes her completely. But then one must wonder if she sees differences at all in what people stand for, or is bothered by it. There's a term for it, but I leave her to discover it.

I agree: Other officials would do well to emulate Paredes' honorableness. Even now I don't know why they shouldn't resign en masse to show a profound disgust with wrongdoing, which is serving a government that shouldn't be there. Or there is another way to look at it, which is to agree entirely with Joker and Miriam when they say that public officials who disagree with their boss should resign posthaste. They should address it to their boss. GMA should resign because she has a fundamental difference of opinion with her own boss, who is the People of the Philippines.

She thinks she is the President, they just think she is the anti-Christ.

Myths of ancient Roman table

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE FRENCH EPICURE JEAN ANTHELME BRILlat-Savarin once said, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are."

The food societies eat, from ancient to modern times, reveals much about the power of their nations and the divisions of the social status of their people.

Prior to the last Christmas holidays, Filipino chef Margarita Fores reproduced the cuisine of ancient Rome, at a dinner at the heritage Goldenberg mansion near Malacañang. Attended by more than a hundred guests, including members of the diplomatic corps, the banquet was hosted by Society Dante Alighiere-Manila, which aims to disseminate Italian language and culture in the Philippines. The guests were seated behind two long tables, 50 for each table, reminiscent of the sumptuous feasting for which ancient Rome had a long history.

The reproduction by Fores punctured some myths about ancient Roman cuisine, long before Italian cooking became renowned for its accent on simplicity and fresh ingredients. Italian cooking started developing from the 16th century through the intervention of the Tuscan Pope Leo X, who brought to Rome the delights of Florentine cooking. Ancient Rome had no haute cuisine, as such. Although the banquet at the Goldenberg mansion had a modern setting complete with cutlery (knives, spoons and forks), Fores' presentation departed from the fact that the ancient Romans, especially the aristocracy, ate with their fingers, no different from Filipinos when we feast in our barrio fiestas.

Fores dug deep into Ancient Roman recipes, including the works of Marcus Gavinus Apicius, who lived in the time of Emperor Tiberius. The Italian author Ugo Enrico Paoli, in his book, "La Vita Romana," had this to say of ancient Roman cooking:

"It is highly likely that if anyone of us had had to take part in a feast like those given by the Romans, we would have come away with a terribly spoiled stomach. The complicated recipes, prepared by cooks who were bought at a very high price, and who put all their knowledge of cookery into the management of the costliest spices and ingredients, would appear utterly impossible for us to enjoy."

Apicius spent most of his fortunes of 60 million sesterces (the ancient Roman currency) on epicurean indulgence that when he had no more than 10 million sesterces (equivalent to three-quarters of a ton of gold bullion), he realized it could not maintain his style of living, so he decided to kill himself by taking poison.

According to a commentary delivered by Luigi Bernas at the dinner, it is important to understand Roman cuisine in the context of the the empire at its height (7 B.C. to 476 A.D). Rome became the "giant stomach" of the world, swallowing ham from Belgium, oysters from Brittany, garum (similar to Filipino *bagoong*) from Morocco, wild game from Africa, spices from Syria and fish from Turkey.

"So rich and so excessive were meals served in cosmopolitan Rome that the state began to worry about food consumption as a form of capital erosion. The state decreed limits to be spent on meat and fish for feasts and to the number of guests" (around nine each table). Cuisine was influenced by the fact that with Rome's rapid expansion, the transport of food from the countryside was slow and "fresh food" had to be stockpiled in warehouses. There was no refrigeration. "Disguising rancidity must have been one of the cook's major preoccupations," says one account.

The Romans often skipped breakfast and lunch. The important meal was the "cena," dinner. The meal began after a visit to the bathhouse at 4 or 5 p.m. The meal started with appetizers to aid digestion, consisting of oysters, marinated octopus, marinated vegetables, wild mushrooms, cured meats or salted fish. The main course consisted of sensational roasts such as pelican, crane, giraffe or bear, or such expensive delicacies as parrot-brains, eel livers, or sows' wombs. Their famous meat dishes included roast sucking pig and lambs. The three-course meal ended with dessert. We are owed to the Romans for the custom of dividing a meal into starter, main course and dessert. Wine flowed. Diners picked their food with their right hands; forks were unknown; knives and spoons were only occasionally used, forcing most Romans to simply eat with their fingers. The Roman matron didn't cook. Cooking was a slave's job.

Fores translated the Roman feast with a menu representing a selected cross section of Roman cuisine. For starters, she had squash flower, oyster, mushroom and apple fritters, grilled Philippine tuna, sautéed snails, Lucanian sausage, cows' brains, Arborio rice. There were three main dishes: roast pigeon with grapes, honey and herb mayonnaise, roast baby goat, laced with garlic-rosemary perfume, minted chickpeas and onion, and Roman-style roast pig, with fennel, poached oranges and potatoes. For dessert, there were goat cheese and ricotta, roasted walnuts and chestnuts, and wine-soaked apples and pears. The red wine, a cabernet sauvignon, came from Forsa.

Fores said she went back to the past to try to make ancient Roman food edible for modern palates. The basic diet of the Roman poor consisted of grain-pastes or coarse bread and a polenta-like porridge made from millet. According to other accounts, cooking was primitive, fuel was a problem and "the fire risk high in the tall, narrow, overcrowded ... tenement houses, which accommodated so many of the people of Rome. The poor, avoided cooking whenever possible. As a result ... they might buy a slice of roast pork or some salt fish from one of the 'grimy cookshops' whose wares were spread half across the public streets."

The emperors kept the poor happy with heavily subsidized grains and gladiatorial circuses at the coliseum.

* * *

Comments to aedoronila@westnet.com.au

Wanted: consumerism

AFTER I COMPLAINED IN LAST FRIDAY'S COLUMN ABOUT my "low-speed high-speed" Internet from PLDT, I got several calls from them promising quick action. Because I was out of the office attending meetings, my administrative assistant at UP was taking the calls and he texted me, expressing awe at how fast PLDT was acting, and wondering why the company couldn't do that for all consumers and not just columnists.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I explained to him that the large corporations do try to act quickly, many of them with a full staff complement working on "corporate communications," which is the new term for "public relations." PLDT even subcontracts public relations firms to handle particular product lines, so one of those who called me explained she could only handle the DSL service, but not WeRoam, another PLDT Internet product.

KMPI, CACP

But public relations is public relations, and I often find myself wondering why we don't have a stronger consumer movement that can help us make the right choices in the first place. It'd have been useful, for example, if there were independent evaluations of Internet service providers, comparing stuff like actual connection speeds, quality of servicing, pricing.

Back in the 1980s, my work in a health NGO included lobbying with government for cheaper and safer medicines. Because of that work, I eventually came in contact with the International Organization of Consumer Unions (now renamed Consumers International or CI), an umbrella group of consumer organizations around the world. CI was based in Malaysia at that time and their staff were always complimenting us Filipinos for our anti-dictatorship "people power" and our strong NGOs; yet, they noted that our consumer organizations were anemic compared with other countries.

Since then, I think the consumer movement has weakened even more. In the 1970s, we had a Kilusan ng mga Mamimili sa Pilipinas Ink. (KMPI), which even produced a magazine, Ang Mamimili, that evaluated consumer goods. In the tradition of the United States' Consumer Reports, KMPI did not accept sponsorship from any corporation and paid for all the products they evaluated. I never forgot the first issue of the magazine that I bought, which had a report comparing different brands of toilet paper, checking if they were indeed 2-ply and actually counting the number of sheets in each roll!

Another active group was the Citizens' Alliance for Consumer Protection (CACP), headed for many years by the feisty Raul Segovia, which worked closely with NGOs to tackle large companies. It was, for example, active on the issue of expensive medicines and worked with the breast-feeding support groups, exposing the way companies were pushing infant formulas in hospitals.

Back then, I told our Malaysian friends we were still a poor country and that eventually, with a larger middle class, we'd probably have more of consumer consciousness. I was wrong. The middle class has grown but not consumer activism. These days, I don't hear of KMPI and CACP. I had to do some searching in the Internet and finally found out that KMPI is still around, headed by retired Commodore Ismael Aparri, but it doesn't have a magazine and has to depend on the press for exposés. The commodore recently exposed an attempt to smuggle in pork from China.

The INQUIRER has our consumer crusader Marietta Giron, whose column features complaints from readers about everything from billing errors to shoddy products. What Tita Marietta does is to call the attention of the companies, and they often respond, but I've noticed how some of the the complaints keep recurring, with the same companies going into their OPM (Oh Promise Me) routines to reform.

Conflict of interest

There are some groups that claim to be consumers' organizations, but many years ago I was warned by CI that these were not internationally recognized. These groups have gained notoriety for giving out awards to corporations supposedly for product excellence, when in reality, they give the rewards in exchange for a "donation" from these companies. The companies then come out with advertisements claiming all of these consumer awards, in effect deceiving the public.

Even worse, mass media have often become captives of the corporations. There are magazines that feature, glossy page after glossy page, glowing descriptions of electronic products, with almost no complaints except, maybe, for the lack of color variations. Again, consumers are often unaware that these products were provided to the writers for free by the companies.

Genuine consumer advocates are vigilant about any possible conflict of interest. This means paying for any product or service to be evaluated. That includes, for example, restaurants. I was pleased to find one Internet site, stefoodie.net, that had ratings of Filipino restaurants, with our gourmet reviewer clearly stating that she pays for all the meals in the featured restaurants. The INQUIRER is currently reviewing its code of ethics, and I hope we require disclosure on the part of writers, for example, stating that they were given a complimentary meal in the restaurant they're writing about, or that the owner of a particular shop was a cousin.

Consumerism

There are many reasons why we haven't developed a consumer movement but, maybe, an important one is that we have been too busy with politics, first getting rid of Marcos and now dealing with the corrupted, corrupting and corruptible in government. The militant organizations also tended to keep a distance from consumer groups because "consumerism" carried negative connotations of capitalism and materialism. I remember one activist telling me, "You're dreaming if you believe you'll ever get a good buy; capitalism is built only on profits."

I'd actually appeal to that profit motive. A strong consumer movement can put enough pressure on business people so they'll see that they lose out if they continue to produce substandard products, or if they have bad service. Simply publicizing the gaffes and the rip-offs scares some companies because it can drive away other potential customers.

Business people have to be reminded that they're consumers too. Jose Concepcion Jr. and his monitoring of petroleum product prices is a good example of how business people can sometimes work in behalf of the public.

Ultimately though, consumer movements have to be supported by the consumers themselves. Ralph Nader's consumer organization was built out of members' dues and sales of their magazine Consumer Reports. Until that happens here, we'll just have to fight for our rights as individuals and teach ourselves—and the next generation of Filipinos—how to see through all the gimmicks of those slick ads and promotional materials, and about their rights as consumers.

A 'way' of leadership

CHRIS LOWNEY SPENT SEVEN YEARS AS A Jesuit seminarian before "morphing" into a corporate man. And, he says, it was his great fortune and privilege "to have left the best company in the 'business' only to land at the best company in another," building a career at J.P. Morgan as an investment banker.

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A few years ago, Lowney distilled his learnings in both arenas in a book, "Heroic Leadership," sub-titling it "Best Practices from a 450-Year Old Company that Changed the World."

As he tells it, Lowney conceived the book after realizing that it was his early Jesuit training that equipped him with many of the qualities of leadership, which helped him succeed in a global company. "I was intrigued by the challenge of exploring what 16th-century priests might teach us 21st-century sophisticates about leadership and about coping with complex, changing environments," he writes. "I finished the project completely convinced of the value and timeliness of what the early Jesuits have to offer."

The Jesuit "way," its approach to the training of members of the Society and their nurturing as priests and leaders, is embodied in four basic principles summed up as: self-awareness, ingenuity, love and heroism. Culling from examples in the lives of pioneering Jesuits and how they coped with the challenges they faced around the world, Lowney offers a model of leadership relevant to Filipinos at this time when our nation is faced with the responsibility of voting our next set of leaders into office. Here's how he closes the book:

* * *

THE JESUIT leadership principles guarantee neither worldly success nor, for what it's worth, outstanding holiness for those living them. Almost 200 Jesuits—including Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier—have been canonized or beatified by the Catholic Church. But precious few of the other Jesuit leaders profiled here have achieved the same saintly distinction. Perhaps we should take this as a small reassurance that the Jesuit leadership way is not a Trojan horse harboring a particular set of religious beliefs.

Still, then as now, it was a religious calling that inspired Jesuits—both saintly and stumbling—to embrace those leadership principles. In fact, every Jesuit would insist that following Jesus is the primary and ultimately the only, nonnegotiable "way." Heroism, love, and ingenuity become meaningful to them as a path to living that religious faith.

But it was not their religious beliefs that made them leaders. Nor, given the apparently weak correlation between stellar Jesuit leadership and eventual sanctity, did leadership necessarily make them better, holier, more grace-filled Christians. The four principles are "for" any belief system, and they "work" independent of any belief system. Though for the Jesuits—as for anyone—a clear sense of their purpose in life undoubtedly brought greater energy, commitment, and desire to lead.

* * *

THE JESUIT leadership way might not be a Trojan horse for Christianity, but a powerful vision shared by many of the world's great religious traditions nonetheless flows just beneath the surface of these principles. Real leaders—real heroes—find fulfillment, meaning, and even success by shifting their gaze beyond self-interest and serving others. And they become greater—enhanced as persons—by focusing on something greater than self-interest alone.

The notion may have a quaintly idealistic, out-of-touch ring in the rough-and-tumble modern world. It's easy enough to accept Polanco's claim that "Jesuits learn best by teaching others." Most would agree that teaching others is in itself a learning process for the teacher, in regard to both the subject matter and oneself. But what might be called "Polanco's paradox"—that serving others benefits oneself—is by no means a phenomenon limited to the teaching profession alone. It plays itself out in other, unlikely arenas. John Kotter and James Heskett, the authors of "Corporate Culture and Performance," surveying the relentlessly Darwinian corporate battlefield, found that leaders at outstanding companies were distinguished by their ability to transcend narrow self-interest to focus broadly on shareholders, customers, and employees. In sharp contrast is the dominant culture at mediocre, also-run companies: "If the managers are the lower-performing firms do not value highly their customers, their stockholders, or their employees, what do they care about? When asked, our interviewees most often said: 'Themselves.'"

* * *

AN EARLIER chapter quoted Harvard Business School professor John Kotter's discouraging judgment: "I am completely convinced that most organizations today lack the leadership they need. And the shortfall is often large. I'm not talking about a deficit of 10 percent but of 200 percent, 400 percent or more in positions up and down the hierarchy." Kotter was right, and the leadership deficit he discussed is much broader than a mere corporate problem. That gap won't be closed by a few Pooh-Bahs atop large organizations clinging to "one great man" or "one great moment" leadership theories.

Instead, the gap is filled one person at a time, one day at a time—in families, classrooms, offices, firehouses, nursing homes, playing fields, and libraries. It's filled by all who refuse to drift through life simply going through the motions and instead commit to purposeful leadership. The world's most successful school system "just kind of happened," one teacher at a time, one day at a time, one school at time. So, too, our society's leadership gap—even one as great as 400 percent—evaporates as parents, teachers, managers and others seize, one by one, the opportunity to make a leadership statement with their lives.

Serendipity in historical research

WHENEVER I OPEN A BOX OR BUNDLE OF HISTORICAL documents or books in search of something specific, I often have to control myself from exploring other materials that come my way. Yet serendipity leads to other places, other rooms. For example, in the Library of Congress in Washington, I was going through a box of materials from the early 20th century that included a small envelope with photographs. I scanned through these quickly but stopped on a group of Filipinos enjoying a picnic in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris.

This reminded me of the famous painting "Dejéuner sur l'herbe," except that on the left side of the photograph, lying leisurely in the grass, with his head resting on his palms, was Jose Rizal! It was a photograph I had never seen before, and though it was not half as scandalous as that where he donned an Egyptian costume or that where his hand lay on the thigh of a man seated beside him, this photograph showed Rizal in a very relaxed pose. It was a photograph that would remind many Filipinos (who have forgotten) that Rizal was also human.

In another box in the Rare and Manuscript Section of the Library of Congress were papers taken by an American soldier from Emilio Aguinaldo's desk when Malolos, capital of the First Philippine Republic, fell in 1899. These papers now form an important link into our past because they contain, among other things, the drafts of Aguinaldo's "Resena veridica de la revolution Filipina." It is significant that this "true account of the Philippine Revolution" is completely in Don Emilio's handwriting. But I was more interested in official correspondence that contained marginal notes—first of Apolinario Mabini who usually read through the letter and made a recommendation, then you had Aguinaldo's scrawl making a decision on the matter. From these state papers, one can see how the government was run and, more importantly, how leaders formed the decisions that shaped our history.

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

The "Philippine Insurgent Records" were returned to the Philippines half a century ago by the United States and this mass of documentary materials is preserved in our National Library. For those without the patience to go through the originals in the original languages, there is a five-volume compilation by J.R.M. Taylor in English, which is the first stop for any kind of research on the period; but it is not arranged chronologically or by subject. So just opening any volume to any page at random is an adventure in itself.

Just recently, I came across a letter from T. Sandico to the President dated Sept. 28, 1898. The letter sounds contemporary because it concerns theft of horses and carriages (because they had no cars then) and, more importantly, kidnapping. Then there was the unauthorized collection of "contributions of war" that Sandico left for another letter. He reported:

"I will confine myself to the theft of carriages; one was stolen by the driver of Sr. Duenas, a Spaniard, which carriage is now in the possession of General Pio del Pilar, who informed me that he could not return the carriage without an order from the government, as he had made a report days ago, another one was stolen in the following manner: the *quiles* of a schoolteacher of the barrio of Concepcion passed against all orders into the possession of Major Carmona; the owner, with a pass from General Estrella, and accompanied by the delegate, Don Venancio Frans, went to the headquarters to demand this *quiles*. Major Carmona, upon being called by General Pio del Pilar, instead of returning the *quiles* demanded by its owner, arrests the latter as an alleged spy of the Spanish government, and the owner, *quiles*, and horse are held.

"Sergeant Barcena, of the zone of General Pio del Pilar, informed me that the cruel officers of that zone were Major Carmona and a lieutenant who was formerly a barber."

The above sounds vaguely familiar if you read about the problems encountered by people trying to retrieve vehicles that have been recovered but impounded as evidence by the police. Reading this letter shows that we haven't changed much in the past century. Sandico continued:

"I understand very well that in endeavoring to stop the abuses committed by our officers and by the Filipinos who claim to belong to us, in Manila, I expose myself to becoming a victim of their vengeance; nevertheless, this does not terrify me, because my duty to the country requires it.

"I beg of you that if you take any steps against Major Carmona and the barber lieutenant, to be very careful and call General Pio del Pilar, and come to an understanding with him as to the mode of punishment. I have discovered grave cases which are occurring in the *praesidio* of Manila, which I propose to relate to you when I shall have the honor to see you personally. I could tell you a good many other things, but I do not do so on account of lack of time, and because I wish to reserve them until I can speak to you privately."

One can only imagine the volume and range of reports sent to Malacañang by mouth, snail mail, e-mail, or text. Things seem simple and manageable a century ago, but the basic problems remain.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

A test of nation's will to survive

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS declared that she is supporting the call of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines for character change. This call applies to all citizens, but most of all to GMA who is the country's No. 1 citizen today. As President—albeit a position she is believed to have acquired fraudulently—she has to comply with the official and moral demands of the office.

She can start by pursuing the reported Impsa-related, $2-million extortion case involving her first justice secretary, Hernando Perez. She can then proceed to the other cases against her underlings and kinfolk who have been charged with irregularities, among them, one of her "richest and brightest" lieutenants—former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante. Failing at this, she can resign—as an act of contrition—to give way to another leader who can redeem the office she has utterly debased. But this is wishful thinking.

The Dec. 17, 2006 prayer rally at the Luneta could have been an exercise in futility. The Arroyo administration's concern was to place all kinds of threats and obstacles to minimize attendance. In this, it succeeded but it did not lessen the impact of the event. It placed in focus GMA's mortal fear of people gathering in large crowds and her contempt of their opinion. It was reported that she left Malacañang at the height of the prayer rally, presumably to go into hiding.

GMA is a test to the nation's fitness to survive as a democracy. For the underprivileged masses, the question is whether they will continue to accept the degradation of their human worth and be cajoled into acquiescence by occasional doles. For the middle class, will they continue to accept the humiliation of impotence in the face of the abuses directed at them by those who govern? For the elite, will they continue to turn a blind eye to immoral behavior in government, provided they can go on preserving their favored position in the distribution of the country's wealth?

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

When will everybody have the courage to demand of our public servants the delivery of services due us and to promptly rid ourselves of servants like GMA and her ilk?

—EP DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St.,
Philamlife Village,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City

US judicial system favors Pozon's view

THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE CUSTody issue of rape convict Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith arose from the conflicting interpretations of the phrase "all judicial proceedings" in the Visiting Forces Agreement. Specifically, that provision states that US personnel tried for crimes in Philippine courts shall remain in US custody until after the completion of all judicial proceedings.

The Court of Appeals has sustained the trial court's interpretation that the VFA provision allowing the US Embassy to keep custody of Smith in all judicial proceedings covers only proceedings before the trial court, and not the appeals process. According to the court, "The term 'all judicial proceedings'... refers to all trial court proceedings. The term is used in its descriptive sense, not in its all-embracing sense." In support of its interpretation, the appellate court said Smith may not remain further under US custody after completion of all trial proceedings because the United States has no longer any further obligation to hold and produce him for any investigative or trial court proceedings. (PDI, 1/4/07) I agree with this interpretation.

The above interpretation specially makes sense in light of the fact that under the American judicial system, upon his conviction by the lower court, a defendant in a criminal case is deemed guilty until his conviction is reversed on appeal. Effectively, until such time, his civil liberty and, to some extent, his political rights, such as the right to hold or to be voted to public office, are suspended. Logically, under this system, "all judicial proceedings" are deemed terminated once the defendant is convicted, and therefore deemed guilty until subsequently finally found innocent, in the lower court.

When it signed the VFA, had the US government not in mind the foregoing restrictive definition of judicial proceedings in light of its own criminal justice system?

—DIOSDADO V. CALONGE,
director, Prosecution Bureau,
Office of the Special Prosecutor,
Sandiganbayan Building, QC

Thieves in Philippine Postal Corp.

UNAWARE OF THE RAMPANT THIEVery in the Philippine mailing system, my daughter sent me a check before the holidays. It never reached me. The check contained a measly amount representing savings of my two young grandsons in the United States who, in their yearning to show their love, wished to cheer their lola and lolo on Christmas Day. Instead, the check was stolen, forged, endorsed and deposited with the Bank of the Philippine Islands branch in Carmen Rosales, Pangasinan.

The thieves, crooks and vultures in our country's mailing system—and for that matter, in the entire government system—will continue to flourish in our country's mailing system, unless they are, cost what it may, booted out. How many more innocent persons will fall victim to their viciousness? Will the government not lift a finger to rid the Philippine Postal Corp. of these corrupt employees?

Believing in the leadership of the newly installed postmaster general, Hector Villanueva, it is my most sincere hope that he will relentlessly go against all the undesirables in his agency. Achieving this objective will mean restoring public confidence in the Philippine Postal Corp.

—RINO M. BASILIO,
11 Cardinal St.,
Dominic I, Quezon City

Junking of LAMP meant to benefit defense usecs

THE REFORMS INITIATED BY FORmer Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz suffered a setback because of the decision not to pursue the order to recall AFP personnel who are not performing core military functions in the Department of National Defense. The decision was made by the undersecretaries who chose to stay with the DND after Secretary Cruz's resignation. Taking advantage of Administrative Order No. 165 reorganizing the defense department, the undersecretaries set aside one of the last orders signed by Secretary Cruz identifying the List of Authorized Military Positions (LAMP) in the DND.

These undersecretaries, who are retired military generals, would have been the most affected by the LAMP order as several of the soldiers covered by it are detailed as their drivers, utility personnel and security escorts. If the LAMP order had been pursued, those soldiers would have been assigned back to the AFP.

Some of the senior active military officers in the DND were pushing for the implementation of the LAMP order so that the recall of the soldiers from the DND could serve as a model in the recall of soldiers detailed outside the AFP and not performing core military functions. However, the undersecretaries questioned the recall order; they said it should first be implemented outside the DND.

This move of the undersecretaries also casts doubt on the sincerity of the department in pursuing meaningful reforms in the DND and Armed Forces of the Philippines.

—ERNESTO ANTONIO,
kawalpagbabago@gmail.com

Doctored quote from Holmes

COMMENTARY

Solita Collas-Monsod

WHAT US SUPREME COURT JUSTICE Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in his 1904 decision in the case of Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad vs May was: "...it must be remembered that **legislatures** are the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts." (emphasis supplied)

What Philippine Court of Appeals Associate Justice Apolinario D. Bruselas wrote, as *ponente* in the Smith vs Pozon case decision was: "...for as Justice Holmes once wisely observed, **'the other branches of the Government** are ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts.'" (emphasis again supplied) Bruselas' footnote indicated the source of his quote as the above-mentioned Holmes decision.

So what? Given the length of Supreme Court decisions, maybe Holmes made both these statements at different times and on different pages.

My lawyer daughter Trina accessed the 1904 Holmes decision for me, and there is no way that Holmes could have done that, because that decision is short—it fits in one single-spaced typewritten page. Nowhere in the decision did Holmes refer to "other branches of the Government." He only referred to "legislatures." Which means that Bruselas' quote of Holmes was a doctored quote (it cannot even be a misquote, because of the direct quotation marks, and because the reference was to one and the same case).

Why get all hot and bothered over this? Well, because that doctored quote was the basis for Bruselas' seemingly helpless acquiescence to what the (executive branch of) government did in the Smith case—which was to take Smith from his quarters in the Makati City Jail (not even a jail cell, mind you) in the dead of night, totally going against the orders of RTC Judge Benjamin Pozon; and not waiting for the decision of the Court of Appeals to whom Smith had gone for relief, and whose stand it (the executive branch of government) had supported. Or put more graphically, the doctored quote was what Bruselas used to let the executive branch get away with taking the law into its own hands and making a mockery of our judiciary.

Actually, except for two paragraphs in his 38-page decision, Bruselas makes a powerful case in support of Judge Pozon's interpretation of the Visiting Forces Agreement provisions over the interpretation of Smith and the executive branch (the Department of Justice, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Solicitor General)—e.g., "Judicial Proceedings" meant "trial court proceedings"; since Smith was convicted, his detention/confinement should be by Philippine authorities; that the appropriate US and Philippine authorities must agree on which Philippine facility (or facility under the Philippine authorities) Smith should be detained in; and pending such agreement, and until further orders from Pozon, Smith should be held in detention at the Makati City Jail.

What were the two paragraphs in which Bruselas wimps out? The first contains the doctored quote: "If it is the position of government that the language of the VFA is clear as seen by the petitioner (Smith) and as also seen by the US Embassy, **despite the strong and palpable indications that it is not so, then let it do as it sees fit and deal with such latest agreement as its sound judgment permits; for as Justice Holmes once wisely observed**, 'the other branches of Government...'" and so on, as cited above. See? Bruselas tells them they're wrong, and then tells them to go ahead anyway and do it, relying on the doctored quote from Holmes.

The second paragraph is on P. 37: "**All of the foregoing discussions notwithstanding,** we are confronted with the latest agreement executed between ... Romulo and ... Kenney who are the authorized signatories to bind state parties to an agreement. **Conformably with the wise observation that the other branches of government are equally the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people**, we resolve to consider the matter treated in the petition MOOT." The doctored quotation raises its ugly head again.

Several questions come to mind, not necessarily in the order of their importance: What would the Bruselas decision have been without the doctored Holmes quotation as justification? Or, until Bruselas used the doctored Holmes quote, it was clear from his interpretation that the transfer of Smith to US custody was against Philippine law and the VFA provisions. Given that the transfer was effected by the Philippine government in clear defiance (or total contempt) of the law and the courts, what could the Court of Appeals have done to the erring officials, other than roll over and play dead?

The question I asked of some legal experts was: What would you have done to the erring officials, if you were the Court of Appeals? The best answer came from Fr. Joaquin Bernas. He definitely wasn't going to roll over and play dead—figuratively speaking, of course. "I would have castrated them," he answered. Figuratively speaking, of course.

Thank you, Father Bernas. One hopes it will still be done, if not by the Court of Appeals, then by the Supreme Court—or rule of law be damned.

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

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MILF predicts more bombings in polls

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBEration Front (MILF) blamed politics for the recent bombings here and in Maguindanao and warned that more bomb attacks could take place as the elections draw near.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the Jan. 5 blast on Makakua Street here that injured Sultan sa Barongis village chieftain Max Malang Utto and two others, and the highway explosion in December that was aimed at Maguindanao board member Datuwata Adziz, "had something to do with the coming elections."

The Commission on Elections is preparing for the May elections that will determine a new set of congressional and local leaders.

While police and military authorities have pointed at the MILF and al-Qaida-allied terror groups of the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemmah Islamiyah as primary suspects in the spate of bombings in Central Mindanao, Kabalu said "there are other armed groups capable of such activity especially so that the election is barely four months away."

Military authorities shared the MILF's apprehension, saying they, too, are not discounting that possibility.

"The possibility of a political angle is being looked into, but the identical use of 60 or 81-millimeter mortars bolstered the theory of a terror group at work," said military bomb expert Capt. Ramon Torres.

Torres, who heads the Army 6th Infantry Division's explosives ordnance group, has linked MILF fighter Basit Usman, whom he described as a JI-trained bomb maker, to the recent bomb attacks.

Kabalu, however, denied Usman's MILF membership. "We are ready to show our official roster of members to the International Monitoring Team and the CCCH (Coordinated Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities) to prove that Usman is not part of the organization," he said.

Kabalu called on residents to be vigilant because intelligence information reaching the MILF predicted that the May elections will be violent and bloody due to proliferation of firearms and explosives.

He assured that the MILF, "a people-oriented group" will remain neutral in the coming political exercise and won't allow its members to be used by politicians.

Talks between the MILF and the government are currently on hold, but steps are being taken to make the peace negotiations succeed.

The pullout of soldiers belonging to the Army's 64th Infantry Battalion from two villages of Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao last year has greatly improved the peace and order condition in the area, the head of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) and the government's ceasefire chief said.

Malaysian Army Maj. Gen. Ismael Khan, head of the IMT and Brig. Gen. Eduardo Gurrea, chair of the government's Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, said for two months now, guns have been silent in the area. *Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

UNICEF AMBASSADOR IINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Popular singer Gary Valenciano, also the Philippine ambassador of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), visits victims of Supertyphoon "Reming" at the Guinobatan East Central School in Guinobatan, Albay. The town was one of the worst hit by mudflows and floods at the height of the typhoon.

Victims of road crash buried in Ibaloi rites

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

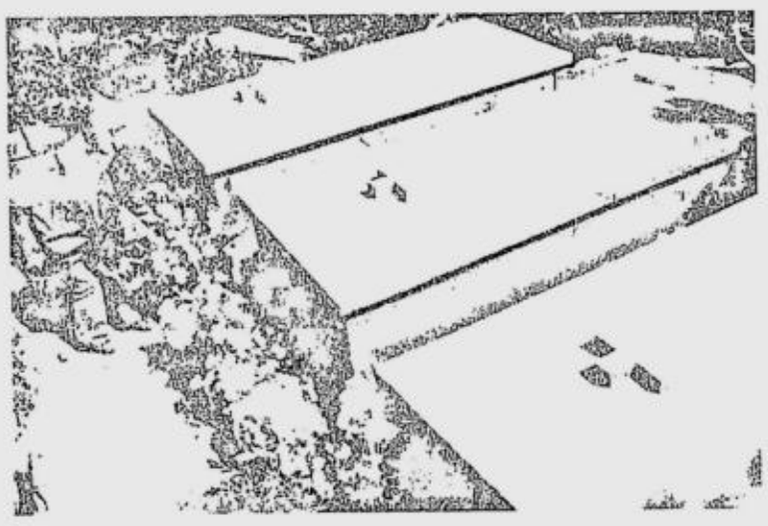
LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—JUAnito Maranes, a 78-year-old *mambunong* (indigenous spiritual leader), invoked the gods on Monday to watch over the parents and siblings of Arnel Marino, 18, and his sister, Jessica, 17.

The Marinos were among the 12 people who died when their jeep smashed into a trailer truck along the national highway in Bauang, La Union, on Jan. 3.

Eleven of the 12 fatalities were simultaneously buried near their respective backyards before noon Monday in Sitio Obulan in Barangay Beckel here. The 12th fatality, Alex William Jr., who drove the jeep, was buried later in the afternoon.

Maranes was stoic considering that he is the great-grandfather of 10 of the 12 victims.

His other great-grandchildren who were killed in that accident were Jay Boy Dudun, Reggie and Hazel Antonio, Arlene and Manilyn Sapitula, Rick Tomas, Lea Bastian and William. Neighbors Roby Jean Javier and Reynaldo Anuran were also buried near their houses in Obulan.



RELATIVES and residents of Beckel, La Trinidad, were on hand during the Ibaloi burial ritual of the 12 people who died in a road crash in Bauang, La Union. TOOTS SOBERANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

"I prayed that whatever good luck they have left be given to their parents and siblings," Maranes said.

The dead, who were between 14 and 19 years old, were given the traditional Ibaloi burial rites.

"If the dead is young, he should be buried at about 10 a.m. until noon," Maranes said.

Old people, he said, were buried at about 2 p.m.

The Marinos were buried in solid pinewood. Upon burial, the nails were pulled out using a crowbar because elders believed it as unfortunate to leave them in the coffins.

Maranes had the coffins reopened after these were placed inside the tombs because the death blankets on their chests were not properly set down.

Pigs were butchered for the dead while two chickens were sacrificed later for the living. Plates of rice and pork with cups of broth were offered separately for those who died peacefully and those who died violently.

Days later, a cañao (feast) will be held for the parents with the butchering of two more pigs. Five to six months later, a *tayaw* (native dance) will be held for the family.

The teeners came from a beach outing in Bauang, using the money they earned from their Christmas caroling in Beckel.

Benguet Gov. Borromeo Melchor said the provincial government gave the families a sack of rice each. Melchor said the province is also giving the families a total of P180,000 in financial assistance.

The local government is also paying for the hospitalization of the survivors.

4,000 kg of smuggled imported meat seized

SANTIAGO CITY—POLICE AND personnel of the city veterinary office have seized more than 4,000 kilograms of smuggled imported meat in separate operations on Tuesday and Saturday at a checkpoint along the national highway in Barangay Sinsayon here.

Solomon Maylem, city veterinarian, said their personnel stopped a freezer van at the checkpoint on Tuesday and seized at least 2,300 kg of pork, chicken and innards, some of these already rotting.

Maylem said the shipment lacked transport permits.

On Saturday, he said their personnel also seized 2,109 kg of chicken and pork from another van for lack of transport permits and inspection documents.

He said the seized cargo were worth P440,900.

Maylem said the shipment seized on Tuesday was owned by one Rely Reyes of Bulacan. He said Reyes's driver and helpers showed them a photocopy of a "recycled" National Meat Inspection Commission permit issued on Dec. 22.

Maylem said several kilograms of the seized meat, which included rotting spleens and livers, were burned.

The shipment seized on Saturday was owned by Orlando Gonzales, also of Bulacan, Maylem said.

He said they gave Gonzales a week to provide them with complete documents for the shipment's delivery to retailers in Santiago City. *Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Quezon execs slam door to 'jueteng'

LUCENA CITY—QUEZON OFFIcials have condemned the planned revival of the illegal numbers game "jueteng" in the province.

"It seems that some very shady groups and individuals are working very quietly to re-install the illegal numbers game," said Board Member Isaias Ubana II in a privilege speech before the regular session of the provincial board Monday.

Bishop Oscar Cruz, head of a crusade against all forms of state gambling, said jueteng is using the operations of the government-run small town lottery as a front for illegal collection of bets and draws.

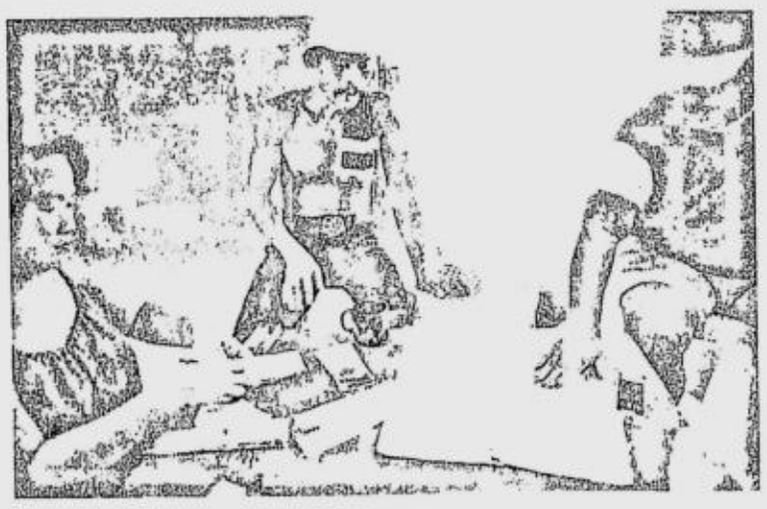
Several top police officers also said STL has messed up the operations against jueteng.

But Ubana said that STL has provided jobs to thousands of its workers, aside from additional income to the local treasuries of 40 towns and one city.

Even officials of the Quezon Mayors League (QML), have also registered their strong opposition to the resurrection of jueteng operations in the province.

"That will never happen. Jueteng could no longer make a comeback in Quezon. The local officials are already satisfied with the benefits from the STL operation," Candelaria Mayor David Emralino, QML president, said.

He confirmed the report that a group of gambling brokers has been luring local executives to revive the illegal numbers game in the province by dropping the name of a Cabinet official and several ranking policemen as protectors.



"JUETENG" operators reportedly dangle campaign money to politicians. FILE PHOTO

Emralino said a certain Fanny Abella, one of the alleged gambling brokers, called her up Sunday evening to solicit his support for the plan.

"But I told her to drop the project because in my personal opinion, that plan will not prosper. Jueteng is already dead as far as Quezon province is concerned," he said.

Tiaong Mayor Raul Umali, QML secretary, shared Emralino's opinion.

"No one from the organization will again support jueteng. We've long forgotten jueteng," he said.

For many years, earnings from jueteng operations have ended up in the pockets of local politicians around the country.

The army of former jueteng bet collectors, who now collect bets for STL, also declared their opposition to the revival of the illegal numbers game.

"We've been to that life of uncertainty before. Sometimes we're legal but the next day, the police will be hunting us down. We're like fugitives. And we don't want to return to that kind of life anymore," Tomas Virtucio, one of this city's hundreds of STL bet collectors, told the INQUIRER.

Aside from Abella, it was also learned from reliable sources that those working to revive jueteng in Quezon were a certain Tony Ong, Boy Zuñiga from Laguna province and a certain Pepe Alcantara from Batangas province, and one Molly Acuña who's in-charge of distributing payola to policemen.

In a phone interview, Romy Quiñones, PCSO manager of special projects department, said the government intended to get rid of jueteng for good.

Quiñones said the contract of all STL franchise holders would be evaluated and assessed by the PCSO board of directors for renewal.

But he hinted at the possible renewal of Pirouette's STL franchise.

"We don't have any problems with Pirouette. The company has been a good partner of the PCSO," he said.

Quiñones said Pirouette had been one of the biggest remitters of STL revenues to government coffers.

Based on the guidelines set by the PCSO, at least 30 percent of the STL income will be allotted to charity. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

7 in Sta. Rosa mayor's murder held, charged

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Police filed double murder and frustrated murder charges against six suspects, including the alleged gunmen and an executive assistant of suspended Mayor Joey Catindig, for the killing of Sta. Rosa City Mayor Leon Arcillas almost two years ago.

Charged at the office of Sta. Rosa prosecutor Alberto Nofuento were alleged gunmen Herminigildo "Pato" Vibal Jr., 27, of General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite; Arnold David, 21, of San Pedro, Laguna; and Cipriano Refrea Jr., also of San Pedro.

The three belonged to the street gang Royal Blood Gangsta whose members have turned gun-for-hire after forays into street crimes.

Also charged were Catindig's executive assistant, Edwin Baqueros, of Barangay Dita, Sta. Rosa City; Ricardo "Peter" Pineda, a businessman and resident of Cabuyao, Laguna; Daniel Yason, said to be a contractor at the Sta. Rosa city hall; and a still unidentified man.

The four, who remained at large, supposedly hired the assassins to kill Arcillas and even provided firearms to the gunmen.

Arcillas, an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, was gunned down inside the new city hall minutes after he officiated at a mass wedding last May 10, 2005, exactly a year after he won his third and last term as city mayor.

Also killed in the attack was the mayor's bodyguard, PO2 Erwin Rivera. His other bodyguard, PO3 Wilfredo Almendras, suffered eight bullet wounds but survived the attack.

Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan, Calabarzon police director, presented David and Refrea to media in a news conference at this camp.

Refrea surrendered last Dec. 15, 2006. David was arrested four days later.

Supt. Mafelino Bazar, chief of the Laguna police intelligence office, said Refrea allegedly admitted being part of the team that assassinated the mayor.

Refrea also named the supposed financiers of the murder plot.

He also identified a certain Reynaldo Cesar as their handler and trainer.

Refrea said he turned himself in after learning that Cesar was killed in San Pedro last Nov. 8, 2006.

Teachers take matters into own hands to help malnourished kids

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PUBLIC SCHOOL teachers Teresita Tiongson and Josie Mangio have taken turns helping Randy Castro, already 14 but just in Grade 3, to continue his studies by providing him free lunch daily from out of their meager salaries.

On Tuesday, Castro's support group has grown beyond his teachers. It is the same for this city's 4,641 public elementary school children found by a health study last year to be malnourished, according to Dr. Eloisa Aquino, city health officer.

Aquino said the integrated school health and nutrition project is, by far, the "most holistic battle" undertaken here against malnutrition.

It draws strength from the cooperation of the city government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health, Department of Education, individuals like pediatrician Leticia Yap and private groups such as Nutrilinc and Rotary Central Pampanga. They comprise what is now the City Nutrition Council (CNC).

"This one does more than feeding the child," Aquino said on Tuesday's launch in Barangay Juliana, one of eight pilot areas.

The program, she said, combines the following efforts: Food production such as vegetable growing, poultry and hog-raising by families, schools and communities; livelihood or job placement assistance to parents; provision of vitamin A, iron supplements, vitamins-fortified food and health services; and nutrition education.

Innovations

"The problem is addressed mainly at the level of families, schools and the communities where the children live. A child's weak body and lack of weight are also manifestations of poverty," said Mayor Oscar Rodriguez, CNC chair.

The same approach has been applied to the city's anti-tuberculosis campaign, which Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has hailed as a "very innovative idea, one of a kind... and the first of its kind" because it "zeroes in on poverty."

Aquino said of the 30,762 pupils enrolled in public elementary schools, 5,602 were found to be below the weight and body mass index proportion. Of these, 4,641 are considered malnourished.

Amelita Serrano said in her 38 years of teaching, she has never seen a year when she did not have an undernourished child among her wards.

This year, 40 of 307 students in her school in Juliana are underweight, said Serrano, the local nutrition leader.

RANDY Castro (left) dreams of obtaining an education. He continues to be in school, care of free lunches from his teachers Josie Mangio (left, second row) and Teresita Tiongson (far right). They are joined by Castro's mother Marilou and brother Brian. On Tuesday, Randy and more than 4,000 malnourished children in Pampanga's capital, started getting help from the City Nutrition Council.
TONETTE T OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

"They're hard-up. Many of them sell plastic bags at the market after school hours. Their parents are pedicab drivers, stevedores, laundrywomen or jobless for many days of the year," she said.

"Teachers like Miss Tiongson and Miss Mangio go out of their way to help the kids and stop them from dropping out of school. Aside from food, we give them free haircut and remove lice from their hair," said Serrano, 60.

Tiongson said Castro deserves help because he has been struggling to learn and has been honest and helpful.

No thief

"Even when he sees a large amount of money on the table, he won't steal a centavo. He helps out with cleaning, gardening," she said.

Aquino said malnourished children perform poorly in academics and it is necessary to improve their health to be able to help them cope with the mental challenges of schooling.

Other schools help out by allotting 35 percent of canteen proceeds to feeding programs. The city government is spending P5 million this year for the nutrition program, Aquino said.

The Rotary group has adopted 31 students and will start a bakery to make nutribuns and *taho* (soy drink), according to its president, Councilor Raul Macalino. Nutrilinc is helping out by preparing soy-based foods.

National Irrigation Administration
Region VI, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

Contract Ref No. NIAR6-NDC-PRIS-CW03-06
Name of the Contract Rehabilitation of Panggipian RIS
Location of the Contract Payao, Binalbagan Negros Occidental

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Irrigation Administration Region VI, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder Contract:

Name of Contract	Rehabilitation of Panggipian RIS
Location	Payao, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental
Brief Description	Canal desilting, canal lining and irrigation service road resurfacing of existing irrigation network
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 12 518 788 73
Contract Duration	90 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary "pass/fail" cri[illegible] the Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct [illegible] duction of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule BAC of activities is as follows:

	BAC Activities	Schedule TIME	DATE	VENUE
1	Receipt from prospective Bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 10-24 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
2	Issuance of Eligibility Forms	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 10-24 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
3	Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 11-24 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
4	Notice of Results of Eligibility Check		Jan. 29, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
5	Issuance of Bid Documents	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 30, Feb. 6 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
6	Pre-bid Conference	10:15 AM	Feb. 6 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
7	Receipt and Opening of Bids	10:15 AM	Feb. 19, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the National Irrigation Regional Office 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 500.00 to the NIA Region VI Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 to the National Irrigation Administration Region VI Cashier.

The National Irrigation Administration assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The National Irrigation Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved
(Sgd.) OLIVER A. CERVANTES
BAC Chairman

(PDI – January 10 & 17, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

53rd TESDA Board Meeting
14 December 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City

Resolution No. 2006-28

APPROVING AND PROMULGATING THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR MECHATRONICS SERVICING NCII, MECHATRONICS SERVICING NCIII, MECHATRONICS SERVICING NCIV, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SERVICING NCII, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SERVICING NCIII, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SERVICING NCIV, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SERVICING NCII, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SERVICING NCIII, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SERVICING NCIV, GAS METAL ARC WELDING (GMAW) NCI, GAS METAL ARC WELDING (GMAW) NCII, GAS METAL ARC WELDING (GMAW) NCIII, FLUX-CORED ARC WELDING (FCAW) NCI, FLUX-CORED ARC WELDING (FCAW) NCII, FLUX-CORED ARC WELDING (FCAW) NCIII, GAS TUNGSTEN ARC WELDING (GTAW) NCII, GAS TUNGSTEN ARC WELDING (GTAW) NCIII, SUBMERGED ARC WELDING (SAW) NCI, SUBMERGED ARC WELDING (SAW) NCII, GAS WELDING (OXY-ACETYLENE WELDING) NCI, GAS WELDING (OXY-ACETYLENE WELDING) NCII, BARANGAY HEALTH SERVICES NCII, ICE PLANT REFRIGERATION SERVICING NCIII, AIR DUCT SERVICING NCII AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT SERVICING (MECHANICAL) NCII

WHEREAS, during the 19th, 20th and 21st Standard Setting and Systems Development TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 16 November 2006, 28 November 2006, 12 December 2006 and 47th EXCOM-TESDA Board 30 November 2006 respectively, the following training regulations were deliberated on and favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the TESDA Board;

Information and Communication Technology (Electronics) Sector
1. Mechatronics Servicing NCII
2. Mechatronics Servicing NCIII
3. Mechatronics Servicing NCIV
4. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCII
5. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIII
6. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIV
7. Consumer Electronics Servicing NCII
8. Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIII
9. Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIV

Metals and Engineering (Welding) Sector
10. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCI
11. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCII
12. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCIII

Metals and Engineering (Welding) Sector
13. Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCI
14. Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCII
15. Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCIII
16. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCII
17. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCIV
18. Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCI
19. Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCII
20. Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding) NCI
21. Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding(NCII

Services (Health Sector)
22. Barangay Health Services NCII

Heating, Ventilation Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) Sector
23. Ice Plant Refrigeration Servicing NCIII
24. Air Duct Servicing NCII

Construction Sector
25. Heavy Equipment Servicing (Mechanical) NCII

WHEREAS, the Technical Experts have endorsed for promulgation the aforementioned Training Regulations:

WHEREAS, in the 53rd TESDA Board Meeting held this 14 December 2006, the TESDA Board agreed and approved the Training Regulations for Mechatronics Servicing NCII, Mechatronics Servicing NCIII, Mechatronics Servicing NCIV, Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCII, Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIII, Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIV, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCII, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIII, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIV, Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCI, Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCII, Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCIII, Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCI, Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCII, Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCIII, Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCII, Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCIV, Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCI, Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCII, Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding) NCI, Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding) NCII, Barangay Health Services NCII, Ice Plant Refrigeration Servicing NCIII, Air Duct Servicing NCII and Heavy Equipment Servicing (Mechanical) NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board approves and promulgate the aforementioned Training Regulations as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and Training Regulations (TRs) be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 14th day of December 2006

(Sgd.) MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

Resolution No. 2006-29

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR SHIELDED-METAL ARC WELDING (SMAW) NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2004-20 Approving the Adopting the Training Regulations for Welding NCII was promulgated by the TESDA Board during the 44th TESDA Board Meeting which was held last 09 December 2004;

WHEREAS, during the 21st Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 12 December 2006, it was agreed that the Training Regulations for Welding NCII promulgated in Y2004 be amended by deleting the provision for Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW), and adopting the training regulations for Shielded-Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NCII;

WHEREAS, during the 53rd TESDA Board Meeting held on 14 December 2006, the TESDA Board agreed and approved the Training Regulations for Shielded-Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the aforementioned amendments to the training regulations, as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and amended copies of the Training Regulations (TRs) for Shielded-Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NCII be published and disseminated to all concerned, and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these amended training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 14th day of December 2006.

(Sgd.) MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

Resolution No. 2006-30

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR CONTACT CENTER SERVICES NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2004-01 Approving and Adopting the Training Regulations for the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sector-Contact Center was promulgated by the TESDA Board during the 41st TESDA Board Meeting which was held last 05 February 2004;

WHEREAS, the Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP) has endorsed the revised Training Regulations for the Contact Center Services NCII (Competencies, Training Standards with respect to the Curriculum Design, List of Tools and Equipment, Trainees Entry Requirements, Trainers Qualifications, Assessment and Certification Arrangements, Competency Map and Acknowledgments);

WHEREAS, during the 21st Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 12 December 2006, the amendments to the Training Regulations for Contact Center Services NCII (Training Standards, Assessment and Certification Arrangements, Competency Map, and Acknowledgments) were deliberated on and favorably recommended to the TESDA Board for approval;

WHEREAS, during the 53rd TESDA Board Meeting held on 14 December 2006, TESDA Board agreed and approved the amendments on the Training Regulations for Contact Center Services NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the aforementioned amendments to the training regulations, as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and amended copies of the Training Regulations (TRs) for Contact Center Services NCII be published and disseminated to all concerned, and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these amended training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. There shall be no mandatory national assessment required for graduates of TVET courses covered by this TR. Instead the performance of registered courses under this TR shall be monitored based on the absorption rate or skills utilization rate of their graduates in the Contact Center Industry.

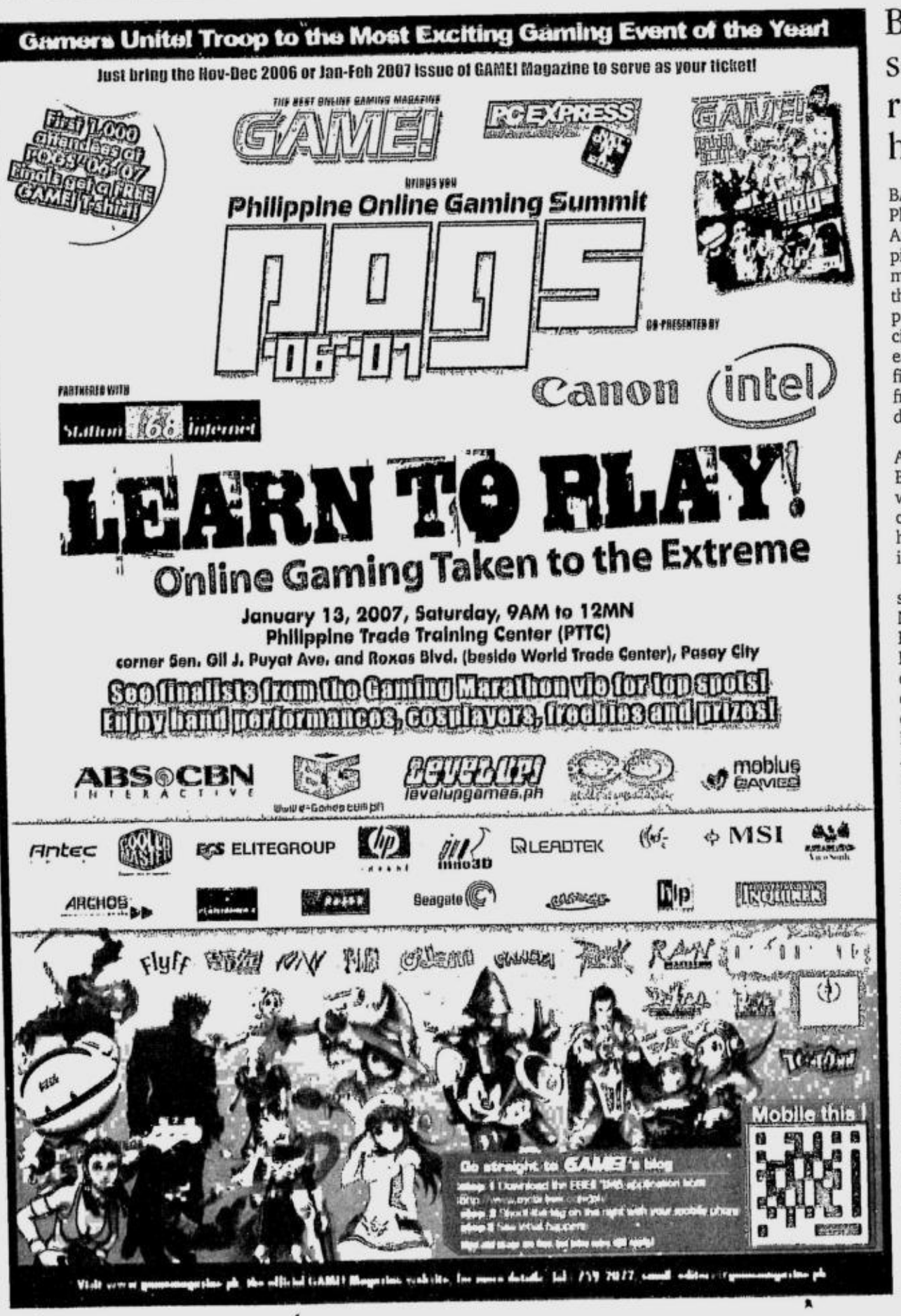
Adopted this 14th day of December 2006

(Sgd.) MA. ADORINA DE JESUS-FORRO
Board Secretary VI

Attested by

DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and skills Development Authority

(PDI – January 10, 2007)



Baguio seen as retirement haven

BAGUIO CITY—THE Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA) will pilot retirement communities catering to the Asian and European market in this city and five other areas that it has identified to be the places friendliest to the elderly.

PRA Chair Edgardo Aglipay announced Baguio's selection this week and asked the city council to hear his proposal during its session next week.

Aglipay wants to showcase Baguio, Metro Manila, Bohol, Davao City, the Subic Bay Freeport and Boracay, Aklan, in commercials that would run over the Cable News Network and other Asian cable channels next month, according to acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr.

"The commercials would sell the city using the phrase 'Smile at Life,'" Bautista told reporters here.

Japan's retirement community recently opened job opportunities to Filipino nurses, following a two-year agreement between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

But the Department of Tourism has been drafting plans to court Japan's elderly into retiring in the Philippines instead. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Super region buoys hopes for brighter year in N. Luzon

By Inquirer Northern Luzon

POLITICAL AND BUSINESS leaders in Northern Luzon have pinned their hopes for a brighter year on government support in boosting investments in the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle (NLAQ), one of the five super regions identified by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The agribusiness potentials of the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera and parts of Central Luzon will be tapped to supply the food needs of Luzon and parts of the north Asian market

Under the NLAQ, the agribusiness potentials of the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera and parts of Central Luzon would be tapped to supply the food needs of major cities and towns in Luzon and parts of the north Asian market.

Infrastructure projects have also been lined up to boost tourism and business activities in these regions.

The government has allocated a total of P56.28 billion for the upgrade of irrigation systems, farm-to-market roads, airports and seaports, and energy sources to improve agricultural productivity and trade.

In Benguet, the Year of the Fire Boar is expected to push the vegetable industry to a competitive level in which quality and steady supply have become the benchmarks of a price-conscious consumer market. The government has embarked on market-driven programs in a bid to make Benguet and the other vegetable-producing areas in the Cordillera the vegetable basket of the NLAQ.

The traditional marketing system that involved middlemen has been strengthened by infrastructure and other support systems, but agriculture officials say they want to help farmers become direct sellers through the Huwarang Palengke (Model Market) and Barangay Food Programs.

Benguet, which is home to more than 200,000 farmers, still produces 75 percent of the country's needs for highland vegetables. But the government's import liberalization policy has cast doubt on the industry's ability to maintain its market when cheaper and better-packed imported vegetables begin to come in.

Basket of support

Aware of the province's crucial role in the NLAQ, the Department of Agriculture said it was willing to give a "whole basket of support" to the farmers to enable their harvests to become globally competitive.

A BENGUET farmer tends her vegetable farm. INQUIRER PHOTO

According to Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup, prospects for Benguet vegetables are bright for the year as food processors and "high-end" or institutional consumers have already taken notice of their ability to replace imported products in the supermarkets. Lately, farmers have taken advantage of contract growing and food processing agreements with multinational companies to boost sales.

La Trinidad town recently inked a pact with Dole Philippines for the construction of a processing and packing plant near the vegetable trading post. "This will enhance the market value of locally grown vegetables," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

Officials of the Regional Development Council in the Cordillera say the future of the region also relies on how well it will address rapid urbanization.

Tourist traffic could account for increased business interest in Ifugao, Mt. Province and Kalinga, they say.

OUTLOOK

Government economists say power generation projects are being started in Ifugao towns. RDC records also show that investors have been considering the building of small hotels in Cordillera towns frequented by European tourists.

Baguio investments

Baguio City has already exceeded its capacity to sustain large-scale businesses and is now compelled to negotiate a joint venture arrangement with neighboring towns to accommodate private investments "that keep coming," officials say.

The city needs to open up new investment areas and the best way to do this is to help secure capital for the towns of La Trinidad, Tuba, Sablan, and the mining town of Itogon.

In Ilocos Norte, business and political leaders agree that 2007 will be a better year for business and investments because the province is bustling with activities.

Commercial structures around the capital city of Laoag and surrounding towns are sprouting like mushrooms indicating a flood of industrial centers, potential investments and an upbeat economy.

The more apparent and large-scale enterprises are the Ilocos Norte Hotel and Convention Center, whose sprawling site near the sand dunes has been cleared up and fenced off for construction work, the nearly finished and homegrown mall called "The Center" in San Nicolas town, and a newly refurbished building that will house the second Chinese consulate in the country next to Cebu.

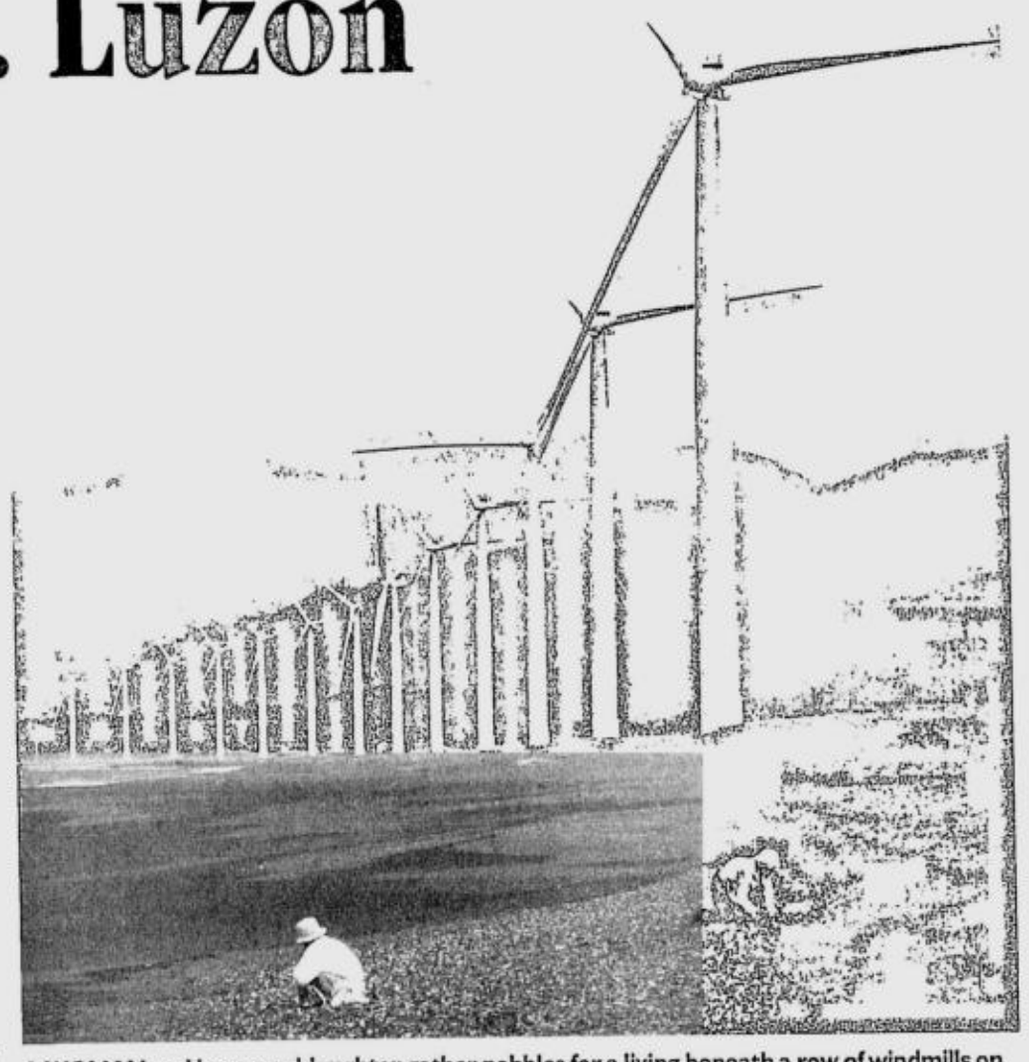
Both the hotel and Chinese consulate are in Laoag and are potential sources of tourism and trade, officials said.

Investor-friendly

Laoag Mayor Michael Fariñas and other members of the city council are firming up the Laoag investment code to create an investor-friendly atmosphere from a one-stop-shop paper processing and offer attractive tax incentives to businessmen.

Councilor Yvonne Ranada, president of the Hotel and Restaurant Owners' Association, says the new convention center is a welcome competition to smaller hotels because Laoag can soon host bigger conventions, which would mean a bigger stream of participants who need accommodation.

Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is optimistic of a vibrant economy on his third and final term on the heels of the first investment forum that Ilocos Norte hosted in October last year to shape the province into a "logistical center."



A WOMAN and her granddaughter gather pebbles for a living beneath a row of windmills on Bangui Bay in Ilocos Norte. AFP PHOTO

"For large-scale enterprises [to come in], we would need to develop further the support infrastructure such as power, transport, communication, financing and peace and order. We have strived to do all that," Marcos said.

He said the key areas of investment were agriculture, tourism, mining, transportation and social enterprise. He said he was considering other development projects to complement the super regions development plan for Ilocos Norte.

The President has identified more power projects to be put up in Ilocos Norte after the operation of the first wind farm in Bangui town.

"We are looking at several areas aside from power. After meeting our requirement of 34 megawatts, we don't need extra power. But as a business, that is strategic and I understand why the national government has put emphasis on it," Marcos said.

Milagros Gonzales, provincial chief of the Department of Tourism said trade and tourism would continue to grow because of the entry of additional flights to beef up existing flights from Taiwan, China and Hong Kong.

Gonzales said the DOT was financing the production of a new travel book that would feature the nine anchor destinations in key areas, including Laoag, to make tourist destinations more attractive to specific markets.

New bridges

Political leaders in Pangasinan say infrastructure projects will boost the province's growth this year.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr., a former mayor of Dagupan City, said the new bridges built in the major trade centers of Lingayen and Dagupan would enhance trade by providing easy transport of products and boost tourist traffic.

The provincial and municipal governments have started implementing development programs based on the potentials of the province, such as agriculture and tourism, in eastern and western Pangasinan, he said. He cited the development of the Hundred Islands National Park in Alaminos City.

In Cagayan Valley, officials are upbeat about the economy.

"This is a region to watch in terms of agribusiness and economic development," said lawyer Silvestre Bello III, outgoing general manager of the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

Alternative route

Bello said the region was being prepared as an alternative air-sea route through developments in the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority.

The NLAQ projects include the improvement of airports in Itbayat and Basco in Batanes, in Lallo and Tuguegarao City in Cagayan, and in Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya, and the P3.3-billion rehabilitation of the seaport in Port Irene in Sta. Ana, Cagayan.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III said Isabela, a major rice and corn producer in Luzon, would be the key in stabilizing the supply of rice in the country.

Rep. Faustino Dy III said local leaders were also hopeful that the Isabela Agro-Industrial Zone project in Cauayan City would be realized this year.

For village leader Peter Duyapat, 2007 will be a year of heightened vigilance for antimining villagers in Didipio in the upland town of Kasibu in Nueva Vizcaya, site of the proposed gold-copper project being pushed by Australasian Philippines Mining Inc. *Cristina Arzadon, Yolanda-Sotelo-Fuertes, Delmar Cariño, Vincent Cabreza, Villamor Visaya Jr. and Melvin Gascon*

Restoring Dagupan's most treasured heritage

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Dagupan City

HUSHED EXCITEMENT AND PRIDE pervade the Dagupeños as the city government has finally shifted attention to the restoration of its most treasured heritage site—the Home Economics building at the West Central Elementary School.

'[The H.E. building] is an important heritage site so we are making sure that this is protected'

The building was used as headquarters by American Gen. Douglas MacArthur after he landed in Pangasinan with Allied Forces on Jan. 9, 1945, to eventually liberate the Philippines from Japanese occupation during World War II.

With its wooden beams already eaten by termites and the whole building sunk several inches by the July 1990 earthquake, the need to restore the building has become urgent and necessary, Mayor Benjamin Lim said. "This is an important heritage site so we are making sure that this is protected," he said.

The building—a modified American colonial house—has three bedrooms, large windows, high-pitched roof and a terrace.

Gabaldon building

It was built as part of the Gabaldon school buildings, which were constructed after Act No. 1801, authored by Assemblyman Isauro Gabaldon of Nueva Ecija, was passed by the Philippine Assembly in 1907.

AMERICAN Gen. Douglas MacArthur chats with local women at the terrace of the Home Economics building of the West Central Elementary School that he used as headquarters after he landed with the Allied Forces at the Lingayen Gulf on Jan. 9, 1945. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DAGUPAN CITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

The Gabaldon Act appropriated P1 million between 1907 and 1915 for the "construction of schoolhouses of strong materials in barrios with guaranteed daily attendance of not less than 60 pupils."

A team of architects from the local chapter of the United Architects of the Philippines has agreed to undertake the restoration work for free.

Lim said an initial fund of P1.5 million from the National Historical Institute (NHI) had been appropriated for the project, which he expected to be finished next month.

Emmanuel Palaganas, second lead architect of the project, said his group was in constant consultation with architect Luisa Valero, NHI restoration expert, to ensure that the structure is restored to its original form.

Eaten by termites

"We are now replacing its weak structural membranes, such as those eaten by termites," Palaganas said.

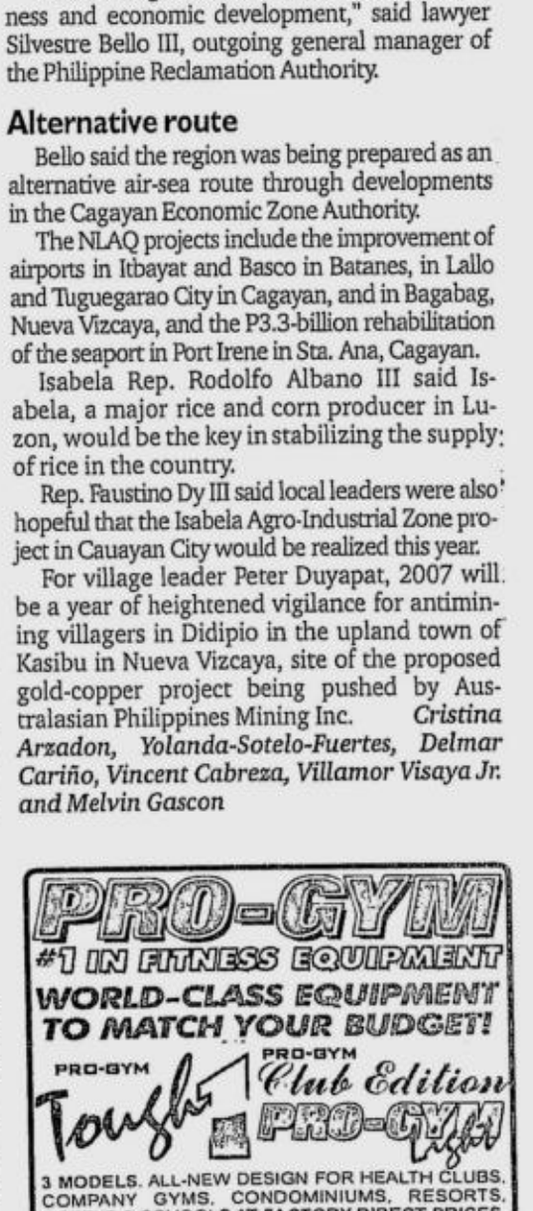
Under the restoration plan, the look and the façade will be exactly the same as those of the original building. The only difference is that the ground floor, which used to be open, will be converted into an office of the Dagupan City Heritage Commission headed by Carmen Prieto.

Once the rotten parts are replaced and the building becomes sturdy enough, it will be jacked up to its original height, Palaganas said.

"The restoration is really a painstaking process," he said. "The original materials used, especially hardwood like narra and *tanguile* are no longer available."

He said his team would be employing highly skilled craftsmen to execute the finishing aspect of the restoration.

Palaganas also said the fixtures, such as enamel water closets and slop sinks, would have to be restored.



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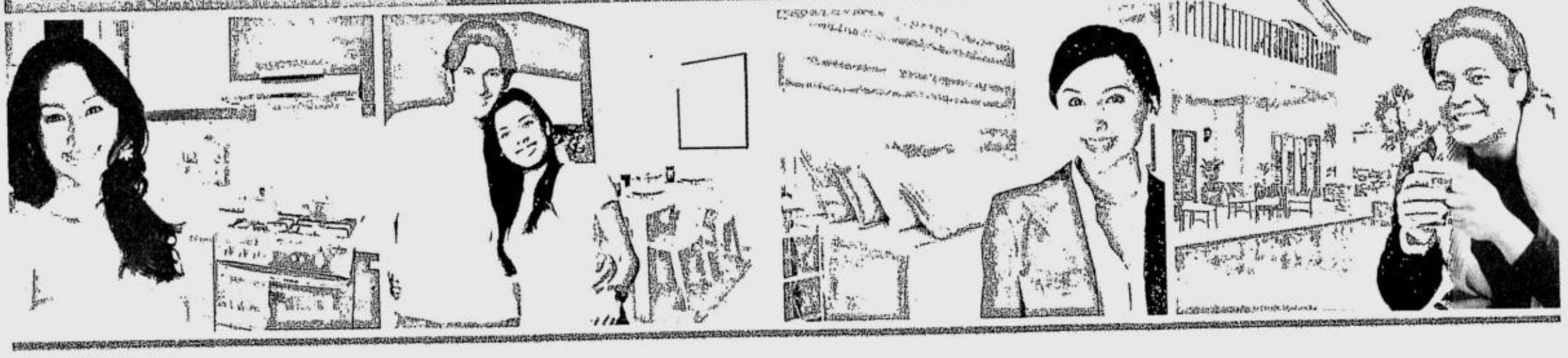

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Devotees share faith, food in Quiapo's Black Nazarene feast

Growing number of females joins fete

By Tina G. Santos
and Cynthia D. Balana

FOR MERCY ARAGONA, A 56-YEAR-old devotee of the Black Nazarene, partaking in an "agape breakfast" not only fills the stomach but also warms the heart.

"It feels good to share something with people you don't even know. You only know that you share the same faith," she said.

The sharing of food among devotees—was held after Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales celebrated High Mass at Rizal Park to mark the 400th year of the Black Nazarene in the Philippines.

Agape is a Greek word translated in the New Testament as "love" or "charity." The word was also used to refer to a love feast among early Christians, an evening communal meal held in connection with the Lord's Supper.

"It becomes an instrument for bringing people from all walks of life closer, even if it is only for this occasion," Aragona said.

She told the INQUIRER that she bought sweet potatoes, *pandesal* with cheese and juices in tetra packs which she shared with at least 10 people.

Luisito Pamen, the driver of a rich businessman, also a Black Nazarene devotee, brought several boxes of food, including sandwiches and fruit juices, which he distributed to people around him.

"It has been my boss' yearly vow to join the procession but he's now out of the country. I'm sure he wouldn't want to miss the occasion but he couldn't really make it. So to make up for it, he just asked me to bring food for the people to share," Pamen said.

Others who attended the High Mass, however, were not aware that they were supposed to bring food.

"Many people claimed they were not properly informed but said they would have loved to participate in the agape had they known about it," said Noel Tandog, a coordinator at Quiapo Church.

Lizzie Lazo, a coordinator for the Black Nazarene feast, said that days before yesterday's celebration, they had urged people to bring food to Rizal Park for the occasion.

"Several church-based groups were encouraged to join the agape by bringing food for the devotees to share," she told the INQUIRER.

Even if an increasing number of females have joined the devotion dominated by men, women like Petra Ramos stood out.

The 55-year-old housewife said she joined the hundreds of thousands of devotees in reaffirming their faith in God and in thanking Him for the blessings they received last year.

"Women devotees like me are few compared to the male devotees of the Black Nazarene," Ramos, a resident of Bangkal, Makati, told the INQUIRER.

She said men dominate the day of the feast, fighting for a chance to carry or get near the statue of the cross-bearing Christ.

Ramos recalled that since she became a devotee in 1961, she has been faithfully attending the Friday masses at Quiapo Church.

"I just decided to devote my life to

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Stolen electric meters found in Caloocan raid

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A RAID ON A WAREHOUSE IN Caloocan City last Friday yielded P5 million worth of electric meters stolen from the Manila Electric Co.

According to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) which conducted the raid, the warehouse located at Lot 28, Block 27 in Villa Luisa, North II, was owned by Johnny Mendoza.

Clients

NBI Interpol Division executive officer Dominador Villanueva said Mendoza, who claimed to be an electrical engineer and contractor, allegedly sold the stolen electric meters to Metro Manila residents and electric cooperatives in the countryside.

Villanueva said that Mendoza removed the Meralco stickers on the meters and tampered with their serial numbers before selling them.

The suspect told the NBI that he bought the electric meters from Meralco, but the power firm refused to recognize the papers that he presented.

Three years

Villanueva said that Mendoza, the former vice president of the homeowners association in Villa Luisa, has been involved in the illegal trade for over three years.

The NBI is set to file criminal charges against Mendoza for violating Republic Act 7832 or the Anti-Electricity and Electric Transmission Lines/Materials Pilferage Act of 1994.

License

According to special investigator James Calleja, the NBI will also file administrative charges against the suspect after checking whether or not he has a license from the Professional Regulatory Commission.

"If Mendoza really is a licensed engineer, we are going to have his license revoked because he has been using his profession in illegal activities," Calleja said.

At the same time, Calleja is asking the public to report to the NBI Interpol Office any person involved in similar activities in their neighborhood.

Calibration

"This illegal business has affected both the electric company and consumers since the stolen electric meters could be calibrated to make them run slower," Calleja said.

"Illegal meters also contribute to the electric company's losses. In the end, consumers will have to shoulder these losses," he added. *With Joba Botana, contributor*

CONFETTI SHOWER
Thousands of devotees are showered with confetti from a Philippine Air Force helicopter during yesterday's celebration of the Black Nazarene's 400th feast day at the Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park. JESS YUSON

Devotees share faith, food . . .

From page A19

Him, not even having a particular intention for Him to grant," she said.

A very familiar face in the crowd was that of Vice President Noli de Castro, who has been a devotee for the past 30 years.

De Castro said that the only time he was not able to join the procession was in 1988 when he was still working for ABS-CBN and covering an event in the United States.

The Vice President, who hails from Mindoro, said his devotion to the Black Nazarene started in 1977 when his career as a radio broadcaster was not taking off.

At that time, a friend told him to visit the Black Nazarene at the Quiapo Church and make a wish.

"I prayed to Him to help me become a good and famous radio broadcaster. Since then, my life has changed," De Castro said.

"*Napunta pa ako sa TV at naging sikat na TV* broadcaster. *Tapos napunta pa ako sa politika. Naging senador at ngayon* vice president. *Hindi ba sobra-sobra ang ibinigay niya sa aking dinasal?* (I became a TV broadcaster. Then I went into politics. I became a senator and now, I am the vice president. God gave me more than what I wished for)," he said.

Work on QC underpass ongoing

By DJ Yap

IF TRAFFIC ON ELLIPTICAL Road seems heavier than usual, that's because construction has begun on a P41.9 million pedestrian underpass linking the Quezon City Hall to the Quezon Memorial Circle.

Work on the underpass, which measures 62 meters in length and six meters in width, started in November. Officials said it would take six months to finish the project.

The structure is expected to improve traffic flow on the perennially busy road and ensure the safety of pedestrians, they added.

At present, people walking from City Hall to the Circle and vice versa have to brave crossing the pedestrian lane while avoiding speeding vehicles.

While crossing the busy road can be done safely during the day because of the presence of traffic enforcers, it becomes a problem, especially late at night, when the traffic aides are off duty.

Officials said the underpass is part of the city government's effort to transform the sprawling five-hectare QC Hall complex into a "world class facility comparable to those in the United States and Europe."

"The underpass shall be a dramatic pathway to what is envisioned as a grandly transformed Quezon Memorial Circle that better honors the man who created our city," said Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr., referring to the late President Manuel Quezon.

The city government has also constructed pedestrian overpasses on Commonwealth Avenue in front of the wet market and near Litex Road, on Katipunan Avenue and another one on Elliptical Road in front of the Philippine Coconut Authority.

The city has spent P52.9 million for the projects, part of P7 billion worth of investments in infrastructure for the past five years, officials said.

Pasay officials sign 4 garbage contracts

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PASAY'S ACTING OFFICIALS have entered into four new contracts for the collection of garbage from the city's 201 barangays this year.

The contracts worth P177 million were awarded to Halrey Construction, R.M. Maintenance Services and Greenline Onyx Envirotech Phil. Inc.

Acting Pasay Mayor Allan Panaligan said the new deals were cheaper by P100 million compared to the P278 million worth of garbage contracts approved by suspended Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad.

Trinidad was handed a six-month suspension order last September by the Office of the Ombudsman for entering into allegedly anomalous contracts for the collection and disposal of garbage in 2004 and 2005. Also suspended were Vice Mayor Antonio Calixto and 10 city councilors.

Panaligan said the new contracts might just help solve the garbage crisis in the city and went through a bidding process.

The number of dump trucks and personnel to be deployed to each vehicle are stipulated in the contracts, along with the time of collection and the volume of trash to be disposed of in sanitary landfills.

There is also a clause that states that the city government has the right to rescind the new deals if the companies involved fail to comply with requirements.

Sought for comment, Trinidad told the INQUIRER that he would look into the new garbage contracts when he returns to office in March.

"I will not cancel them immediately. But I will have to look and study if there is any irregularity in the contracts. But it looks like there is. The cost was cut, but the city stinks even more," he said.

Trinidad also claimed that the schedule of garbage collection in the city has become irregular.

"Is it worth it to endanger the health of the people just to save a few pesos?" he asked.

QC policeman dead in ambush; 2 hurt

By DJ Yap

A POLICEMAN DETAILED AT the Quezon City Hall detachment was shot dead by unidentified assailants as he was about to leave for work yesterday morning.

Two others, including his wife, were wounded in the shooting.

An investigation showed that PO2 Pio Horada, 39, and his wife Elsie were in their car and about to leave Violago Homes, Parkwood Hills in Barangay Payatas when at least five gunmen riddled him with bullets.

Horada died on the spot. Elsie was hit in the left side of the body while a stray bullet hit Reynaldo Miraflor, a security guard of the subdivision, police said.

The two were taken to the Far Eastern University Hospital for treatment, according to a report by case investigator PO2 Joel Gagaza.

Criminal investigation unit desk officer SPO2 Rafael de Peralta said Elsie was in critical condition while Miraflor was now stable.

The suspects fled on board a passenger jeepney bound for Rodriguez, Rizal, Gagaza said.

Police remain clueless about the motive for the killing, De Peralta said.

2 hurt in Muntinlupa fire

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TWO PEOPLE WERE INJURED after a fire broke out in a fastfood outlet inside a mall in Muntinlupa City before noon yesterday.

City fire marshal Supt. Danilo Ortiz identified the victims as Oliver de Leon and Wilmer Mendoza, employees of Church's Chicken located on the second floor of Metropolis Mall in Alabang.

First degree burns

Both sustained first degree burns after they tried to put out the blaze which began in the kitchen where three liquefied petroleum gas tanks were being kept, Ortiz told the INQUIRER.

Witnesses said the three LPG tanks suddenly spewed flames, triggering the fire that broke out at 11:40 a.m. yesterday.

"Based on our investigation, it looks like one of the tanks sprung a leak," Ortiz said.

P1-M damage

Damage was pegged at P1 million after the fire was put out 35 minutes later. The establishment was owned by George Fong.

No customers were reported hurt in the incident. But the short-lived fire caused a panic, Ortiz said.

"Fortunately, people had not yet started coming in for lunch when the incident happened," the fire official added.

METROBRIEFS

2 dead in mishap

TWO WORKERS of Quezon City's parks development and administration department were killed in a road accident yesterday afternoon as they were taking down Christmas lanterns on Commonwealth Avenue. Based on initial reports, Victorino Dagang and Nomeriano Genale were removing the lanterns on a center island when a Toyota Corolla, with plate number TLY 261, hurtled toward them. The car driven by Adrian Enriquez, a doctor of the Far Eastern University Hospital, slammed into the victims, killing them on the spot, said Crisanto Gragasin, a desk officer at Quezon City Traffic Sector 5. Enriquez told investigators he lost control of the car after a passenger bus overtook him.

DJ Yap

Sad homecoming

HE WAS looking forward to coming home from Saudi Arabia in March to finally be with his wife and celebrate her birthday. But Remigio Millare Jr., 34, had to rush home two days ago after his wife Jennifer suddenly died on Friday. "I feel angry and disappointed," Millare told the INQUIRER yesterday amid suspicions that Jennifer died after she was injected with the wrong medicine. A relative who had accompanied Jennifer to the hospital allegedly overheard a nurse saying she had given the victim the wrong injection. The INQUIRER tried to get the side of the Alfonso Specialist Hospital in Barangay Rosario, Pasig City but was told the official authorized to speak was not available. "We will wait for the results first before we decide what to do," Millare said. He admitted that his wife was suffering from a heart ailment—but when she went to the hospital on Friday, she was complaining of a fever and cough.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Gaby dela Merced: Responsible racer and passbook saver

Living the fast life isn't all fun and games, in fact it entails some interesting responsibilities.

At 23, young female sports racer Gaby dela Merced knows that professional racing goes beyond speed and power. While circuit racing brings tremendous excitement to sports enthusiasts, she also recognizes the responsibility of setting a good example especially to those who look up to her exceptional skills

For instance, despite a promising sports career which started way back during her high school days Gaby made it a point to finish her studies even if it meant working long hours after her regular training. "I have always been a working student even in high school, and so I am pretty much used to juggling school work with sports."

The pretty racer attributes her success to her family, who continues to guide and support her every endeavor. "As a child we were taught to be very responsible, especially about money. When I was younger, I was so 'kuripot', I did not want to spend the money that I earned, now I know better."

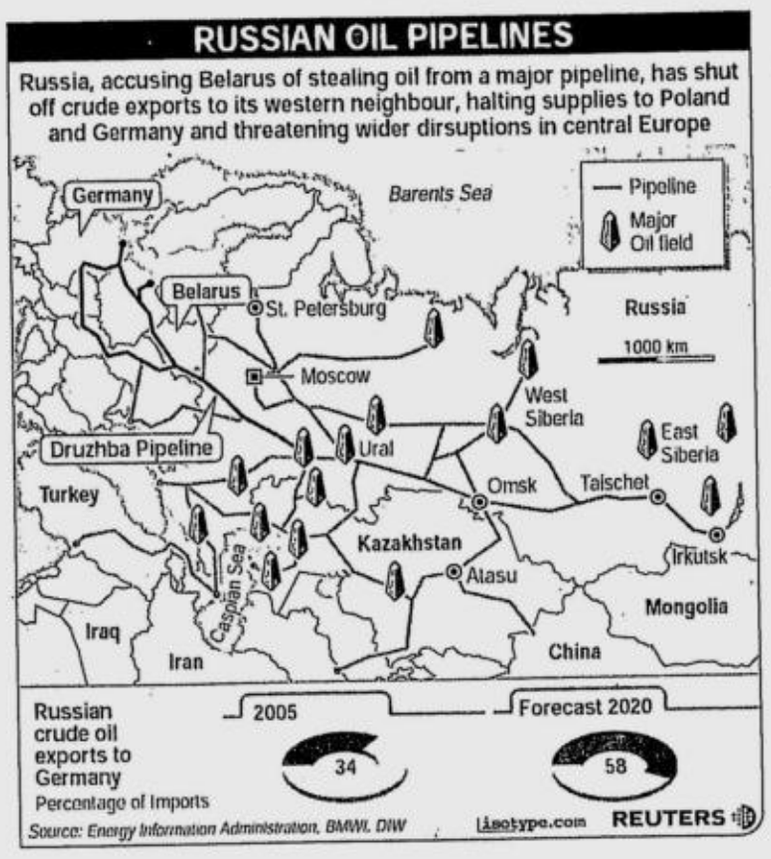
Gaby believes that part of working hard, is enjoying one's earnings. "I think we all deserve to reward ourselves from time to time," she said. She describes herself as a disciplined spender, if she there is something she truly wants, then she has to cut down on her other expenses.

To carefully monitor her expenses, Gaby maintains a passbook savings account. "I prefer passbook savings because I am able to control my spending patterns. I can only withdraw during banking hours and so I have to really plan what I will do with my money."

As for her choice of banking institutions, Gaby is very particular about service and reliability. "The bank has to be financially stable, because all my earnings will be under their care, and of course the employees must be efficient and very friendly," she said.

As one of the country's premier financial institutions, PSBank understands very well the discerning needs of Gaby and like-minded Filipinos whom they can entrust with their hard-earned savings. Known for introducing a number of innovations, PSBank has even redesigned its passbook to help the bank's clients keep better track of their money and their aspirations in life. It features additional space for personal notes as some depositors write annotations in passbooks to help them monitor their account movements. This additional column makes the passbook more than a passbook but more like a personal journal or diary, giving more emotional attachment to the account holders. The additional column also lessens the cluttered look of the passbooks because of the many notes written by the owners.

Advt.



Chavez moves to nationalize power, telecom industries

CARACAS—LEFTIST VENEZUElan President Hugo Chavez said Monday he would ask the legislature to approve the "mother of all revolutionary laws" giving him the power to nationalize the power and telephone sectors.

The proposed legislation would also allow Chavez to end foreign control of refineries of heavy crude from the Orinoco region in the east, he said.

"In the Orinoco region … international companies control and dominate the refining processes of heavy crude," Chavez said at the swearing in of the cabinet for his new government's six-year term.

"That has to be passed on to Venezuelan," he added without giving further details of the reform he intends for Venezuela's chief revenue-making sector.

Venezuela, which produces mostly heavy crude, relies on foreign companies, mainly from the United States, to refine much of its oil.

Chavez also announced a "deep reform" of the constitution in order to create the "Socialist Republic of Venezuela" to replace the current official name, The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, established in the 1999 constitution.

CHAVEZ AP

"One year is a fair amount of time" to pass the law, Chavez said, adding that it would deliver other economic, social, and security benefits.

"It will be the mother of all revolutionary laws," said Chavez, who was reelected last month and will be sworn in to a six-year term Wednesday. He was first elected in 1998.

Recalling that in 2001 parliament gave him special powers that allowed him to pass land reform law—which triggered a general strike by business owners and political unrest—Chavez said the new law would go even further.

"If in 2001 we had an impact on the economic and social structure of the country, this time the impact on the current economic situation has to be much greater," he said.

"Let's regain ownership of our strategic sources of production … All that was privatized must be nationalized," Chavez told 2,000 cheering officials and followers at the swearing-in ceremony.

The National Assembly is unlikely to resist Chavez's call, with his supporters dominating it ever since the opposition boycotted elections in 2005.

Chavez also declared that the country's central bank "does not have to be autonomous; that is a neo-liberal concept." Last week he announced that his government will credit $7 billion dollars of the $37 billion in international reserves held by the central bank to the country's fund for national development and the construction of socialism.

Beginning last year, Venezuela has been renegotiating its contracts between state-run Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) and foreign oil companies, including the US' Chevron and Texaco, and France's Total.

Venezuela's power sector is run by government-owned CADAFE except in Caracas, where privately-owned Electricidad de Caracas is in charge.

The telephone service, land-lines and cellular, is now controlled by CANTV, which was privatized in 1991—majority holder Verizon Communications is selling its Venezuela share to Mexico's communications tycoon Carlos Slim. *AFP*

Russia halts oil exports to Belarus; Europe hit

MOSCOW/WARSAW—RUSSIA, accusing Belarus of stealing oil from a major pipeline, has shut off crude exports to its western neighbor, halting supplies to Poland and Germany and threatening wider disruptions in central Europe.

Russia's pipeline monopoly Transneft said on Monday it was forced to act because Minsk had been siphoning off oil illegally from the Druzhba ('Friendship') pipeline system.

The oil supply cut was reminiscent of a stand-off last year between Russia and Ukraine that hit gas supplies to Europe. It escalates a tit-for-tat dispute between Russia and longtime ally Belarus, who have imposed punitive oil levies on each other.

The European Union demanded an "urgent and detailed" explanation, a spokesperson for Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said. Europe is heavily reliant on energy powerhouse Russia for its oil and gas and extremely vulnerable to Russian supply cuts.

Transneft Vice-President Sergei Grigoryev told Reuters: "The Belarussian side began taking transit oil as payment in kind for a new duty it had illegally imposed." "We therefore reduced transit supplies, equal to the amount being taken. We then reached the point where we had to stop supplies completely." Belarus had until recently served as a loyal client state of Russia, and the two countries have discussed launching a common currency as a precursor to creating a political union.

But Moscow's recent decisions to impose duties on oil sales to its neighbor, double gas prices and ban sugar imports have led President Alexander Lukashenko to turn against his patron, Kremlin chief Vladimir Putin.

Lukashenko—called Europe's last dictator by the United States—last week slapped a $45 per ton transit fee on Russian oil pumped via Belarus. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

US submarine, Japanese ship collide

DUBAI—A US nuclear-powered submarine collided with a Japanese crude oil tanker in the busy shipping lanes of the Straits of Hormuz, the US Navy and Japanese government said Tuesday. No one was seriously injured. Damage to the fast-attack USS Newport News submarine and the supertanker was light and there was no resulting spill of oil or leakage of nuclear fuel, officials from US Navy, Japanese and Emirates government said. Both ships remained able to navigate, Navy officials said. The bow of the nuclear-powered Newport News was traveling submerged when it hit the stern of the supertanker Mogamigawa as the vessels were passing through the Straits Monday night, causing minor damage to the Japanese vessel, the US Navy and Japan's Foreign Ministry said. *AP*

Search on for missing Indon plane

ON BOARD KRI FATAHILLAH—Indonesian and US ships sailed Tuesday to where investigators believe metal objects detected on the sea bed could be the wreckage of a missing passenger plane. The large objects were detected by sonar in an area of the ocean off Indonesia where search and rescue teams have been hunting for traces of an Adam Air jet carrying 102 passengers and crew. The objects were detected by an Indonesian ship in deep waters off western Sulawesi, part of a massive search area covering tens of thousands of square kilometers. However, more sophisticated equipment from a US Navy vessel is required to determine whether the debris is indeed from the Boeing 737-400. *AFP*

9/11 accomplice gets 15 years

HAMBURG—Mounir el Motassadeq, a Moroccan convicted as an accomplice in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a German court on Monday. Motassadeq was given the toughest sentence possible under German law after the country's highest appeals court had ruled in November that he had played a role in the death of 246 people on the four aircraft used in the attacks. The court in Karlsruhe in southwestern Germany had also convicted him of the lesser crime of belonging to a terrorist organization, before referring the case to Hamburg for sentencing. *AFP*

China's police raid suspected terrorist training camp; 19 dead

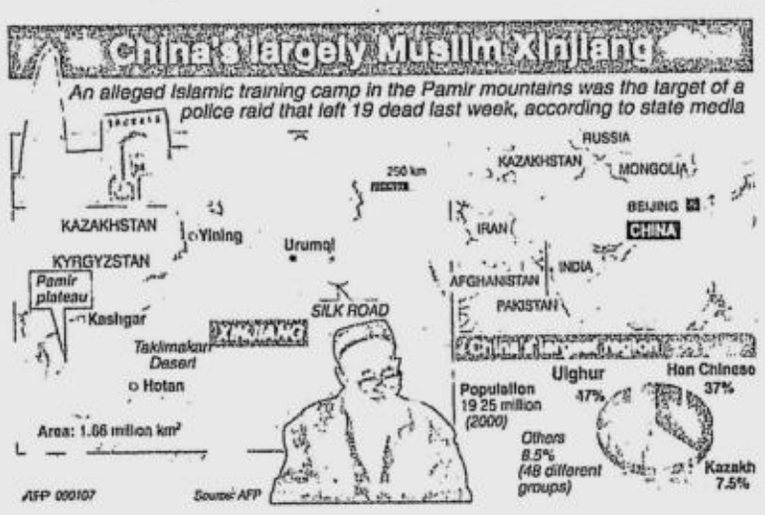
BEIJING—CHINA SAID TUESday that international Islamic extremists were infiltrating its northwest Muslim-populated region, after police killed 18 suspected terrorists in an attack on an alleged training camp.

But the leading exiled ethnic Uighur group struggling for an independent homeland in China's Xinjiang region questioned the motives for the raid that also left one policeman dead and another injured.

"We have evidence that shows these terrorists are connected with international terrorist forces and that they were planning terrorist activities," foreign ministry spokesperson Liu Jianchao told journalists.

"Faced with a threat, policeman have to be able to respond and they killed 18 and arrested 17 terrorists." The alleged training camp belonging to the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)" was located in the Pamir mountain region bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, China's official Xinhua news agency said.

Police confiscated 22 hand grenades and found up to 1,500 other devices that were being produced, the report said. Liu said the bombs were "antitank grenades." Xinhua also said the group may have infiltrated the region with the help of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. Although Liu referred to international terrorist groups, he refused to comment on links to al-Qaida.



The United Nations and the United States listed the East Turkestan Islamic Movement as a terrorist organization in 2002, although critics have suggested Washington only did so to win China's support for the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Zhao Yongshen, China's vice head of the Xinjiang antiterrorist force, insisted the threat of terrorism in the region was real and said terrorists had killed up to 160 people there over the past "several dozen years." *AFP*

Another prelate quits in Poland

WARSAW—THE CATHOLIC Church in Poland was in turmoil Monday as a second prelate stepped down because of his Communist-era secret police ties, after Sunday's resignation of this city's archbishop over similar allegations.

Questions spread about just how broad and deep a stain secret-police collaboration has left on a church long regarded as a beacon of faith and freedom. Many people also have asked how or why the Vatican could have invited the storm by appointing a man to such a sensitive post despite knowing that he had a clouded past.

"The people responsible for the procedure of appointing such candidates applied the traditional way of doing it, which means it was without an investigation and was based on their confidence in the truthfulness of the candidate," said the Rev. Dariusz Kowalczyk, head of the Jesuits in Warsaw.

In short, church officials from Warsaw to Rome suggested that the archbishop, Stanislaw Wielgus, alone was to blame.

But many people here worry that a mishandling of the affair could permanently damage the last major bastion of Roman Catholic faithful in Europe at a time when the church in Poland is already facing the secularizing trend that has emptied churches in Italy, France and Spain.

While cases of Communist collaboration by Polish clergy have made headlines before, the latest threatens to set off what some worry could be a pernicious cycle of exposures that could erode the Catholic Church's image in Poland.

Just a day after Wielgus resigned after admitting he had collaborated with Poland's Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa, or Security Service, the Rev. Janusz Bielanski resigned as rector of Krakow's Wawel Cathedral, the burial site of Polish kings and queens. *NYT*

Inquest into Diana's death resumes

LONDON—A BRITISH JUDGE ruled Monday that members of the royal staff would not be jurors in an inquest to determine how Princess Diana and her boyfriend died in a Paris car crash 10 years ago, casting aside royal convention.

Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss decided it would be "inappropriate" for a royal jury to be called, the usual procedure for an inquest into the death of a royal family member. Any jury would be made up of ordinary citizens, although she may decide the case alone.

Diana's sons, Princes William and Harry, were not present, but their private secretary attended, and Butler-Sloss read out a letter filed on their behalf.

"It is their desire that the inquest should not only be open, fair and transparent but that it should move swiftly to a conclusion," said the letter, written by Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton, private secretary to the princes.

The hearing was procedural, and no evidence was heard by Butler-Sloss, a now-retired senior judge who was appointed as a royal coroner.

Butler-Sloss opened the hearings by offering her sympathy to the couple's families: Lady Sarah McCorquodale, Diana's older sister, sat on one side of the courtroom; Mohamed al Fayed, Dodi's father, on the other.

A two-year French investigation, a three-year Metropolitan Police inquiry and repeated legal action by al Fayed have delayed the inquests by nearly 10 years.

It is likely the inquest—which, under British law, must be held when someone dies violently, unexpectedly, or of unknown causes—will begin in early May, Butler-Sloss said. *AP*

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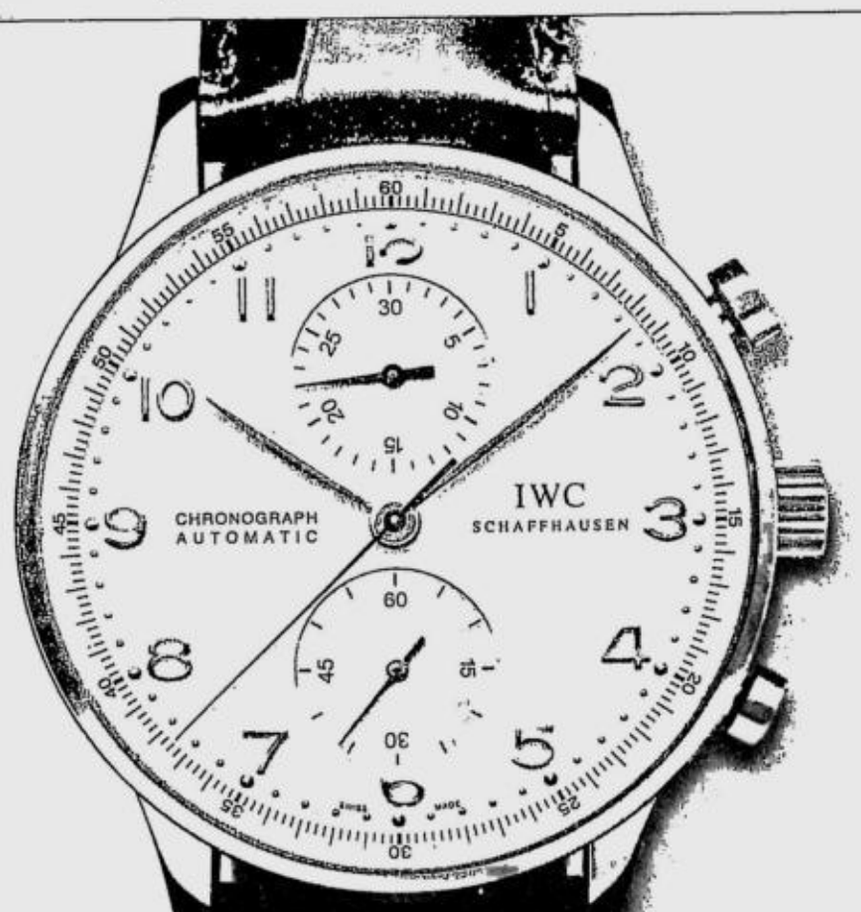

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush to unveil new Iraq strategy

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush will roll out his new Iraq strategy in a speech on Wednesday, shaping the way the unpopular war will be fought for his final two years in office.

BUSH REUTERS

Bush's new plan was expected to couple an increase in US troop levels in Iraq, perhaps by as many as 20,000 soldiers, with a set of political, economic, and security benchmarks that Iraq's government must strive to meet.

But opposition Democrats, swept to control of the US Congress in November elections fueled by anger at the war, have preemptively warned that Bush will not get a "blank check" for more troops or billions of dollars in new spending.

"It is time to bring the war to a close," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wrote last week in a letter to Bush in which they called for a phased US withdrawal to start in four to six months.

Bush was to travel Thursday to Fort Benning, Georgia, a sprawling base known as "the Home of the Infantry," to push his plan while aides like Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates wooed US lawmakers.

"It's important to get congressional support," said White House spokesperson Tony Snow, who declined to provide details of the new proposal.

"It's tempting to think, boy, this is going to set off a big old political firestorm—and it very well may. But on the other hand, it may actually set off a period of reflection and constructive activity," he said.

Snow said he had asked major US television networks to carry the speech, which follows a sweeping overhaul of the US diplomatic and military leadership in Iraq nearly four years after the war began. *AFP*

New video of Saddam on Internet

BAGHDAD—A NEW VIDEO OF SADDAM Hussein's corpse, with a gaping neck wound, was posted on the Internet early Tuesday, the second leaked release of clandestine pictures from the former leader's hanging and its aftermath.

The video, which appeared to have been taken with a camera phone, pans up the shrouded body of the former leader from the feet. It apparently was taken shortly after Saddam was hanged and placed on a gurney. He was hanged shortly before dawn on Dec. 30.

As the panning shot reaches the head region, the white shroud is pulled back and reveals Saddam's head and neck.

His head is unnaturally twisted at a 90 degree angle to his right. It shows a gaping bloody wound, circular in shape, about an inch below his jaw line on the left side of his neck. His left cheek is marked with red blotches, and there is blood on the shroud where it covered his head.

The 27-second video was posted on an Iraqi news website that is known to support Saddam's outlawed Baath Party.

"A new film of the late immortal martyr, President Saddam Hussein," the website said in a headline over a link to the video.

Voices could be heard on the video. As the shroud is pulled back, one voice says, "Hurry up, hurry up. I'm going to count from one to four. One, two ... Hurry up you're going to get us into a catastrophe."

Then another voice, apparently the man taking the pictures, says, "Just one second, just one second, Abu Ali. I'm about finished." *AP*

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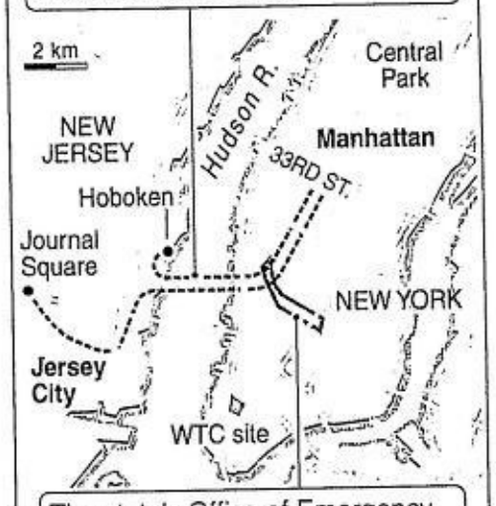
NEW YORK GAS

The mysterious smell of gas throughout much of Manhattan forced the evacuation of buildings and a temporary suspension of a commuter train service on Monday

Part of the New York-New Jersey PATH commuter train system was shut down temporarily



The state's Office of Emergency Management initially reported that the odour originated from around 4th Street and Bleecker Street

REUTERS

Mysterious gas smell hits NY

NEW YORK—A POWERFUL, MYSTERIOUS smell of gas wafted through much of Manhattan and parts of New Jersey on Monday, forcing building evacuations and a temporary suspension of commuter train service before dissipating by mid-afternoon.

Officials were quick to stress that the odor was not dangerous, but at least 19 people went to the hospital with minor ailments and its wide extent provoked jitters in a city that constantly reminded of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Twelve people were taken by ambulance to New York hospitals by emergency workers responding to calls from people complaining of upset stomachs, dizziness or difficulty breathing, a Fire Department spokesperson said.

"It was all minor," said the spokesperson, although he said a total of 409 fire trucks and hook and ladder rigs were scrambled to investigate the fumes—about six times more than during a normal period.

A spokesperson for ConEdison said the company had found no problems in its natural gas system that would have explained the smell. "We did not find any gas leak or any problem on our gas system," spokesperson Joseph Peta said. "At this point the cause of the odor remains a mystery." Seven people went to the hospital seeking treatment in New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from New York, although New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the odor was not dangerous and no unusual gas leaks had been found.

"It may just be an unpleasant smell, but at this point we do not know any more than that. The one thing we are confident about is, it is not dangerous," Bloomberg told a news conference. *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Houston has no problem despite Yao absence /A26

SPORTS

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Comets plant foot inside semis

By Jasmine W. Payo

MAIL AND MORE IS PROVING TO BE QUITE A handful.

This time, it was Ronjay Buenafe who exploded with 20 points as the Comets streaked to their sixth straight win with a 78-67 decision of the Tele-Tech Titans yesterday in the PBL Silver Cup at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym

The Comets remained on top with a 7-2 slate. But more importantly, the league newcomers secured at least a playoff for an outright semifinal slot.

"Chemistry was the key, the desire to win was there," said Comets coach Lawrence Chongson. "We knew what's at stake—one foot will be in the semis—so we worked hard in practice."

Apart from scoring his personal best, Buenafe contributed six rebounds, three assists and three steals. The streaky swingman also teamed up with Mike Bravo in a 14-0 run that sealed the Comets lead in the fourth quarter.

With the victory, Mail and More claimed the longest winning streak in the conference after Hapee-PCU opened with five straight wins.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym)
2 p.m.—Kettle Korn-UST vs Hapee-PCU
4 p.m.—Magnolia vs Cebuana Lhuillier

Another bonus came later when Mail and More found itself alone on top after Henkel Sista bowed to Toyota Otis, 82-66, in the second game.

Patrick Cabahug and Marvin Cruz combined for 33 markers for the Sparks, who zoomed to a double-digit advantage, 22-9, in the first period and never looked back.

"Their transition offense is one of their strengths," said coach Louie Alas after the Sparks grabbed a piece of third place. "We were able to stop that."

Henkel Sista slipped to second at 6-3, while Toyota Otis joined Hapee-PCU and Harbour Centre at 5-3. TeleTech absorbed its fourth loss in eight games to settle at sixth place.

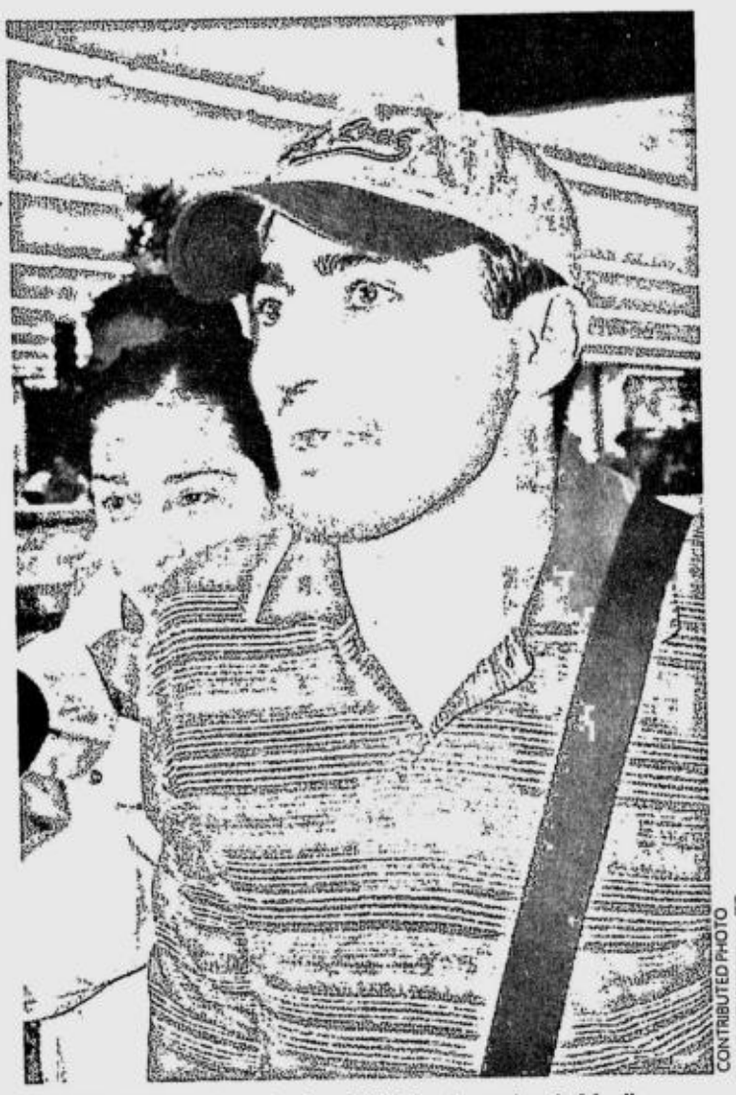
The scores:

First Game

MAIL AND MORE 78—Buenafe 20, Quiñahan 15, Bravo 10, Yambao 7, Viray 5, Cañizares 4, David 4, Del Rosario 4, Coyukang 4, Espiritu 2, Te 0.

TELETECH 67—Valenzuela 15, Capus 11, Villamin 8, Mercado 7, Magpayo 7, Latoreno 7, Tan 5, Magdadaro 2, Labagala 2, Estrada 2, Concha 1, Guerrero 0, Grijaldo 0, Doruelo 0.

Quarters: 17-11, 34-35, 54-56, 78-67



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NO VILLAIN: Mexican ring icon Erik Morales arrives in Manila Saturday with wife Andrea. The couple are to proceed to the exclusive Amanpulo resort off Palawan this week. *(See story on A24)*

BAP offers top post to Go

By Marc Reyes

GUESS WHO THE controversy-rocked Basketball Association of the Philippines offered its presidency to after sacking Sen. Jinggoy Estrada?

The equally controversial Go Teng Kok.

And in a mild surprise, the athletics chief turned the post down, saying he did not want to further strain his relationship with Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, which has become testy over the past few days following a melee that took place during a meeting recently.

"It was offered to me before and lately they talked to me again after Senator Estrada was removed," Go revealed. *(See main story on A25)*

Go recently quit his post as special assistant to Cojuangco after being embroiled in a melee during an executive committee meeting wherein witnesses said punches were thrown and water was splashed around before cooler heads intervened.

This was part of the reason why Go nixed

BAP/ A24

MORALES (right) with wife Andrea. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 'villain' Filipinos now love

By The Inquirer Sports Staff

ERIC MORALES THOUGHT THAT FILIPINOS considered him as a villain.

That was until the world-famous Filipino hospitality embraced and held him dear.

The iconic Mexican pug, in the country to vacation on one of its most exclusive island resorts and to film a television commercial for San Miguel, fell in love with the Philippines the moment he set foot on its soil.

He admits to being completely bowled over by the people's warmth and the welcome he received.

"I was surprised that the Filipinos are so warm," said Morales, as quoted by a confidante of his nemesis Manny Pacquiao. "Initially, I was scared (to come over) because of all the negative publicity (about the Philippines).

'Filipinos love Manny'

"I thought that I was such a villain here because the Filipino people love Manny (Pacquiao) so much."

Morales, according to the source who requested not to be named, recalled how he was mobbed on Monday by diners and shoppers at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall who recognized him even though he was wearing a baseball cap and sunglasses to conceal his identity.

"I thought that the people here hated me," Morales said.

The 30-year-old, a native of Tijuana who flew in Saturday evening, described the Philippines as "very much like Mexico, the people here also having a solid religious background."

With wife and pal

Morales planed in with his 23-year-old wife Andrea, a teacher with whom he has an 11-month-old son, and Jorge Quezada, a childhood friend who carries the Mexican flag to the ring in all his fights.

The former two-time world champion's party had dinner Monday night at the residence of businessman-sportsman Hermie Esguerra, where they were joined by Aida and Mario Cagayat, a Filipino couple that owns a house next to the Moraleses in California.

"Morales could not believe what he saw on TV about the many devotees to the Black Nazarene," added the source, who was included in the group that, together with Esguerra's family, feasted on *lechon* (roast pig) and other Filipino delicacies.

Suspected ulcer

Pacquiao was supposed to be in that gathering but had to check himself in at the Cardinal Santos Memorial Hospital in Mandaluyong City due to suspected ulcer. Doctors were expected to order the release of the Filipino boxing superstar yesterday afternoon.

Morales and Pacquiao, who will film the San Miguel Beer commercial together with American trainer Freddie Roach, actually met Saturday night at the Diamond Hotel on Roxas Boulevard. They were said to have downed several beers each before retiring in the small hours of Sunday.

Morales, Andrea and Jorge will fly to the Amanpulo resort off Palawan on Saturday for a much-needed vacation, away from the prying eyes of the public and the media.

"It's expensive there," the source added. "From what I heard, a trip there would easily cost around P700,000 per head."

Express seek playoff berth

Take on also-ran Coke Tigers

AIR21, A RUNNING TEAM THAT HAS HAD no equal in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup's wild-card phase, tries to seal a playoff for the last quarterfinal berth when it clashes with Coca-Cola tonight at the Araneta Coliseum.

After two blowout victories, the Express are heavily favored to prevail in the 7:20 p.m. match with the Tigers, who are already out of the running. A win would send Air21 into a knockout game with Sta. Lucia on Friday.

The Realtors slug it out with the Alaska Aces in the 4:35 p.m. opener, with the latter having already bombed out two game days ago.

Sta. Lucia can make the quarterfinals outright only in the event of an Air21 loss.

"Life goes on for us, we will prepare for them (Express) starting tomorrow (Monday)," said Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua. "It's okay (that Alaska lost to Air21 and Sta. Lucia failed to get a free ride). We don't expect favors from anyone."

Chua watched that game after his Realtors steamrolled past the Tigers, 122-75, for the fifth-highest winning margin in PBA history.

It was a win that meant little to everyone, as far as the overall standings were concerned.

"This win gives us the confidence again," said Chua, who snapped a four-game losing skid and won for only the third time in his last 10 games. "More or less, we will be headed to a playoff. And it's important that we go there with a winning feeling."

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Alaska
7:20 p.m.—Air21 vs. Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola got eliminated because of that loss, the significance of a 99-98 win over Alaska on Friday going down the drain.

And Air21 coach Bo Perasol couldn't have gotten a better deal, as he goes into a must-win game against a side that has literally nothing but pride to play for.

"I'm looking forward to battling Coca-Cola," Perasol said, moments after the Express' 112-106 decision of the Aces. "Our job is not done yet."

Perasol pulled an ace in Egay Billones for that win. The 5-foot-8 third-string guard shot all of his 16 points in the final two periods where the Express erased several double-digit deficits.

Streak-shooting Gary David and the high-flying Nino Canaleta will again banner the Air21 offense, with help to come from Ranidel de Ocampo and Mark Clemence Telan. *Musong R. Castillo*

ALEX Cabagnot of Sta. Lucia and Dennis Miranda of Coca-Cola seem to find the ball too hot to handle in Sunday night's game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

RP, Korea jins begin joint training today

PHILIPPINE TAEKWONDO GETS A BIG BOOST as a team from Korea noted for producing world champions begins today its cross training with the national squad at the Rizal Coliseum.

The training, which ends on Jan. 18, has been described by Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado as "part of the national team's elite training program to further improve the local jins' skills."

The training also serves as a good exposure for the Filipinos, who are preparing for the upcoming Thailand Southeast Asian Games, the London Olympic qualifying competitions and the world championships in China.

Kim Hyung-tae, Lee Jeong-hung, Yim Kyu-man, Park Jse-hyun, Song Sang-jae, Jung Sokwan, Lee Jong-min, Lee Woo-yeo, Yoo Seonghyung, Jung Young-joon and Yoon Hyu-seob make up the visiting squad, which is handled by head coach Lee Kyung-bae and coach Lee Sangho.

The RP team is composed of Tshomlee Go, Mary Antoinette Rivero, John Paul Lizardo, Kirstie Elaine Alora, Esther Marie Singson, Donald David Geisler III, Alenxander Briones, Dax Alberto Morfe, Michael Alejandrino, Ma. Criselda Roxas, Manuel Rivero Jr., Jeffrey Figueroa, Kathleen Eunice Alora, Gerrielyn Aranzanso, Loranie Lorelei Catalan, Rene Ann Ortega, Richelle Dinolan, Dennis Rocel Resaba, Juan Ricardo Miguel Bernardino, Ernesto Juan Mendoza III, Raffy de Jesus and Brix Darmo Ramos.

The cross training, sponsored by Smart, PLDT, Petron and Philippine Sports Commission, will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 5 to 8 p.m.

Orcollo tops Derby 'ring'; Reyes falls

ORCOLLO: Clean sweep

DENNIS ORCOLLO BESTED ALL his foes to rule the Ring Game event and somehow cushion the defeat of compatriot Efren "Bata" Reyes in the Bank play yesterday in the Derby City Classic at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky.

Orcollo, the 27-year-old Philippine money-game king, defeated Jon Hennessee, Sparky Ferrel, Richie Orem and former United States Open champion Corey Deuel on the way to the title.

Orcollo's triumph came after Reyes and Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat fell short of the 9-ball bank championship.

Reyes and Luat were of two of the last three players left after 12 rounds of play, but it was American Steve Moore who stole the thunder by crushing them en route to the title.

Reyes, who won all his first 12 matches, actually had two chances to snare the crown, but he blew them both against Moore. Luat also fell to Moore in the 13th round.

"After he was eliminated in the 9-ball bank, he (Orcollo) told me he would bounce back, which he did," said Orcollo's manager Perry Mariano.

"We're hoping Dennis will win another one in the US."

A total prize pot of $100,000 total pot is at stake in the competitions being held in the hometown of former world boxing champion Muhammad Ali.

Orcollo added the Derby title to the World Pool League crown he won last year.

Orcollo's victory in the finals was sweetened by the fact that once he got to the table, he ran it out, never letting the opponents stand again.

Other Filipinos entered in the two-week long classic are Jose "Amang" Parica, Santos Sambajon, Lee Van Corteza, and Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

Orcollo will proceed to Tokyo to vie in the Kansai Open on Jan. 20, along with reigning World Pool titlist and Bugsy Promotions teammate Ronnie Alcano and Carlo Biado. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Evidence mounts against chess game fixers

By Marlon Bernardino, *Contributor*

NATIONAL CHESS OFFICIALS YESTERDAY insisted that results of several tournaments last year were tainted by game-fixing or "networking."

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay, president of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, said they arrived at this conclusion based on the result of their preliminary inquiry.

"Our initial investigation showed that there was really game-fixing or networking that happened in a number of tournaments we conducted last year," said Pichay.

Pichay said they have collected strong evidence against the seven players suspected of dropping key matches.

Another NCFP official, requesting anonymity, said the players include a Grandmaster, two International Masters, two National Masters, an untitled player and a woman master.

"We will not hesitate to impose sanctions on those who will be found to have committed such unsportsmanlike act," said Pichay. "Whether he is a GM or an unrated player, we don't care. There will be no sacred cows here."

Another NCFP official said that the suspects, particularly the men, conspire to help whoever starts a tournament strongly by deliberately losing or drawing matches.

The network will then divide the prizes they will get.

"Game-fixing has no place in chess," said the Surigao congressman. "We believe that if we play honest-to-goodness chess, we will be one of the most powerful chess countries in the world.

"That's why we will not bend. We're hell-bent on stopping game-fixing so that the quality of our games will improve."

According to Pichay, among the tournaments where game-fixing occurred were the Tanauan Open, Inter-Provincial Championship in Cagayan de Oro City and National Championships in Manila last month.

FILIPINOS seeing action in the Asian Zonal, led by GM Eugene Torre (right), pose with Pichay (fifth from left) and delegation head Willie Abalos (left) before boarding yesterday's flight to Vietnam.

SPORTSWATCH

MCC execs' chess Saturday

THE MCC EXECUTIVE 2000 BELOW ACTIVE CHESS TOURNEY REELS off at 12 noon on Saturday at the lower second floor of St. Francis Square behind SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. This one-day event is exclusively for executives holding managerial or supervisory positions in private and government firms, businessmen, professionals with at least two years of practice, military officers whose rank is not lower than a major and executive retirees. Interested parties are advised to register at least 30 minutes before the games start. Entry fee is P600 with free MCC TS. For other details, call 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069.

Makati derby slated

THE WTJ SPORTS AND AMUSEMENT CORP., IN COOPERATION WITH B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador, presents the first ever Makati International 8-Cock Super Derby on Feb, 5, 7 and 9 at the Makati Coliseum. The three-day event dangles a minimum guaranteed prize of P3 million. Promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co, who have the support of more than 70 leading local derbyists, confirmed yesterday the arrival of at least 15 international cockers from the US, Mexico, Guam and Japan. Meanwhile, businessman Willie Villarica topped the first Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby last Jan. 6.

GCAP derby at San Juan

SEVENTY-TWO QUALITY FIGHTS WILL SPICE UP THE GENTLEMEN Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby today at San Juan Coliseum, with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Derby starts at 5 p.m. Totoy Haruta took the crucial early lead in the GCAP Cocker of the Year race. Meanwhile, SJC's Sama-Sama Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan, slated on Jan. 19, dangles a guaranteed prize of P100,000 for an entry fee of P1,100. The second SJC Cockers Club 4-cock derby series sizzles on Jan. 17. For inquiries, call 7255369 and 7256563.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Sword O'War (8), Jen Is Nice (9), Untouchable (6), Boss UFO Naman (4), Showgirl (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Brazilian Babe (11), Windsong (13), Hot Stuff (7), Tigerific (3), Fuego (8)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Spark (8), King's Choice (7), Tiger Raffy (3), Strong Fed (5)
RAce 4—(Mulligan (5), Gorgeous Sand (13), Naglalabyog (14), Ocean Cookie (6), Golden Lance (4)
Race 5—Idol (8), Ayan Na Ko (7), Yukozuna (5), Sweet Talk (4)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Andorra (11), Parrot Moe (13), Clear Stone (8), Mas Que Nada (5), Spell Bound (7)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Prince Valiant (3), Without Warning (5), Slew Dancer (4), Heart of Jonna (8), Gigi's Gold (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Shipman (5), At All Cost (9), Batang Westside (7), Erica's Talent (3), Money Man/Santiago (6), Reporter (8)

BAP offers. . .

From page A23

the BAP offer, saying he didn't want to further get into Cojuangco's bad side. Besides, Go said, "it was never in my agenda" to be the BAP president.

POC spokesman Joey Romasanta refused to comment on that development, although he cited some personalities who are out to pit Go against Cojuangco.

RP quint may miss Olympic bid

SBP has little time to gain Fiba nod, send team to Seaba caging

By June Navarro

THE LATEST FIASCO INVOLVING THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines (BAP) is squeezing the life out of the country's bid to play and win a berth in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas has four months to iron the creases brought about by the BAP's ditching of its president, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, and gain the blessing of the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) if it hopes to send a team to Beijing.

The road to the Olympics starts with the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Championships tentatively set in May in Kuala Lumpur.

That road, though, is filled with potholes and the SBP has little time to get it paved.

The Seaba is the qualifying tournament for the Asian Championships to be held later this year in Saitama, Japan. Finishing in the top two of the Asian Championships would mean a ticket to the 2008 Olympics.

"These are the key tournaments that we should focus on to realize our Olympic dream," said SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan.

"We have to prepare the team on the presumption that we will play in the Seaba."

To get there, the SBP has to convince the Fiba to finally acknowledge its status as the country's national sports association for basketball. That would negate alleged efforts by the BAP to scuttle unification moves.

After that, the PBA will have to decide whether it will free its players for the regional meet.

The current national pool aligned with the SBP is composed of top players in the Philippine Basketball Association. It was training under coach Chot Reyes until the basketball controversy forced its hiatus.

"My players are always ready," Reyes told the INQUIRER. "We know we can win that (Seaba) tournament with plenty to spare. It's now up to the PBA if the program for the national team should be resumed."

The last time the national team played was when it successfully defended the Sultan's Cup in Brunei last August.

The key, though is to get the Fiba nod despite the absence of the BAP in the new federation. That is expected to consume the SBP's schedule in the next four months, especially after the firing of Estrada, who came close to unifying the country's basketball stakeholders until he was unceremoniously axed by the BAP.

NATIONAL coach Chot Reyes (center) with members of the national training pool shortly before the team was mothballed last year. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

PBA commissioner Noli Eala said if the country fails to play in the Fiba-Asia, there would be only one person to blame.

"Graham Lim should explain to the Filipino people in Plaza Miranda why the Philippines cannot play in the Fiba-Asia," said Eala, referring to Lim, the court-declared alien largely credited for Estrada's ouster.

Reyes said the national team would immediately plunge into training once the pro league gives its nod at the PBA board meeting set on Jan. 15.

In a solid show of force, the PBA-backed nationals led by Asi Taulava, Willie Miller, Danny Seigle, Dondon Hontiveros, Jimmy Alapag, Dorian Peña, Kerby Raymundo, Tony Dela Cruz and Rommel Adducul showed up at the press conference of the SBP at the Makati Shangri-La the other day.

"It only shows how eager my players are to play for the national team," said Reyes.

Pangilinan also floated the idea of hosting the Seaba just to make sure the national dribblers could get an instant crack at the Asian Championships.

"The hosting was awarded to Kuala Lumpur because nobody wanted to host it (Seaba)," said Pangilinan. "We'll try to host it. As I've said, the things we're doing now is easy compared to the broader tasks ahead."

More cage groups 'ready to abandon BAP'

By June Navarro

THE NATIONAL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION OF Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu) is not the only one disaffected with the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Naascu president Dr. Jay Adalem said several other BAP member groups are beginning to see the light following what he said was the organization's latest effort to ruin unification talks with Pilipinas Basketball.

"Other members of the BAP share the sentiments of our organization," said Adalem after the Naascu league defected to the PB on Monday.

"They will probably come out in the open when the time is right."

The Naascu, a group composed of 10 schools, was part of the 66-member organization which the BAP claims is under its fold. Naascu's shift of allegiance increased the PB membership to 22.

Adalem, who represents Saint Claire in the Naascu board, explained that they decided to jump ship after the BAP dumped Sen. Jinggoy Estrada as its president.

Fiba falls in love with a bedbug

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THIS IS A CHAPTER IN THE biography of a bold bedbug.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada on Monday bared a new fighting motto.

"Bedbugs are for crushing," he declared.

Of course, Mr. Senator, sir.

Unfortunately, this bug you had singled out was one of a kind.

It doesn't only infest beds and suck blood.

The flat, wingless pest inflicts and infects, causing misery in the national basketball community, to as far and wide as the international basketball scene.

The thing has also proved durable, truly tough, unsinkable.

* * *

After countless tries to smash it, the dirty bug is back again—now meaner, more menacing.

"Let me take care of him," Jinggoy, flashing a patriot's badge of courage, vowed before a function room packed with people who sincerely care for Philippine basketball.

The young lawmaker, in popping black suit and red tie, appeared ready to go to war.

He had just been fired as president of the troublesome Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Jinggoy nevertheless came to the presscon to join major basketball stakeholders and reaffirm his affiliation with the Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas, a pioneering group headed by tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan which has been working double time for the reformation of basketball in the Philippines.

Jinggoy showed up to fulfill a commitment, adding he came as a senator representing those who truly care for Philippine basketball.

* * *

At the coffee shop of the Makati Shangri-La, Jinggoy later bared how the discredited BAP sec-gen Graham Lim had vehemently tried to dissuade him from coming to the unity affair.

"I would be untrue to myself if I did not show up," Jinggoy told a small group of media people that joined him for coffee.

"Isn't Graham Lim an out-and-out *surot*?" exclaimed B., a media person who helped invite people to the affair.

What's *surot* in English? she was asked jokingly.

"Bedbug, what else?" B. retorted very seriously.

There was uncontrolled laughter around the table.

"Now, the Fiba should listen and act once we've sent them the biography of this bedbug"

* * *

A consensus was next reached: the best solution to the national basketball mess was to get rid of Graham Lim.

For the record, Lim is a confirmed alien who had been deported but who has predictably resurfaced to sow dissension among those who were working for unity in Philippine basketball.

Jinggoy was asked what he planned to do with Graham Lim.

The senator smiled and lit another filtered cigarette.

Jinggoy's cellphone beeped.

"The best solution is assassination," the senator mumbled while reading the text message.

There was laughter again, followed by nodding silence among members of the small media group.

* * *

Yes, there was no problem looking for a solution to the national basketball mess: get rid of the bold bug.

But the bigger puzzle was how and why Graham Lim has been allowed to violate Philippine laws and at the same time terrorize the ranks of those who have been sincerely working for the renewal of Philippine basketball.

He must have somebody big behind him, it was suggested.

"Definitely not President Arroyo," Jinggoy remarked.

"Fidel Ramos?" K. suggested, explaining Lim had in the past honored FVR's father with a major tournament called the Narciso Ramos Cup.

"What about Freddie Jalasco, FVR's son-in-law who also was BAP president?"

"FVR did not like him, besides, Jalasco is now also an ex son-in-law."

* * *

Inevitably, the question of funding—where Lim has been drawing all necessary cash—had to be raised.

"Definitely not from Lito Puyat, he could not even buy a new -----," quipped R. a tall morena beauty.

"Heard some big *jueteng* money had been deposited in his name by this former BAP official, but the bug took away everything for himself," suggested E. after a swig of cold beer.

"Where did he get all the money to buy immigration people?"

"Maybe from his Chinese connection."

"Did he also use his bank account to influence the Fiba, including Yoo Cheo Hok, Fiba-Asia sec-gen into patronizing him?"

"No, the Fiba simply loves to nurture bedbugs, the bolder the better."

SPORTS

DESPITE YAO ABSENCE

Houston has no problem

HOUSTON—TRACY MCGrady scored 25 of his 31 points in the second half and hit the go-ahead jumper to lift the visiting Houston Rockets to an 84-77 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Monday night.

McGrady's long jumper with 1:19 left broke a 77-77 tie. Houston's Shane Battier blocked a driving layup by Ben Gordon with 25 seconds left. McGrady then hit one of two free throws to make it a three-point game and Chuck Hayes and Luther Head added two apiece.

It was the fifth 30-point performance in six games for McGrady, who hit just three of 10 shots in the first half.

Juwan Howard added 16 points and nine rebounds, Dikembe Mutombo grabbed 16 rebounds and the Rockets won for the sixth time in eight games since Yao Ming broke a bone in his right leg.

Gordon led Chicago with 24 points, and Luol Deng scored 20 after finishing with 30 in Saturday's 106-89 win over Detroit.

At Oklahoma City, Sam Cassell scored 31 points and Cuttino Mobley finished with 20 to lead the Los Angeles Clippers to a 100-90 victory over the Hornets.

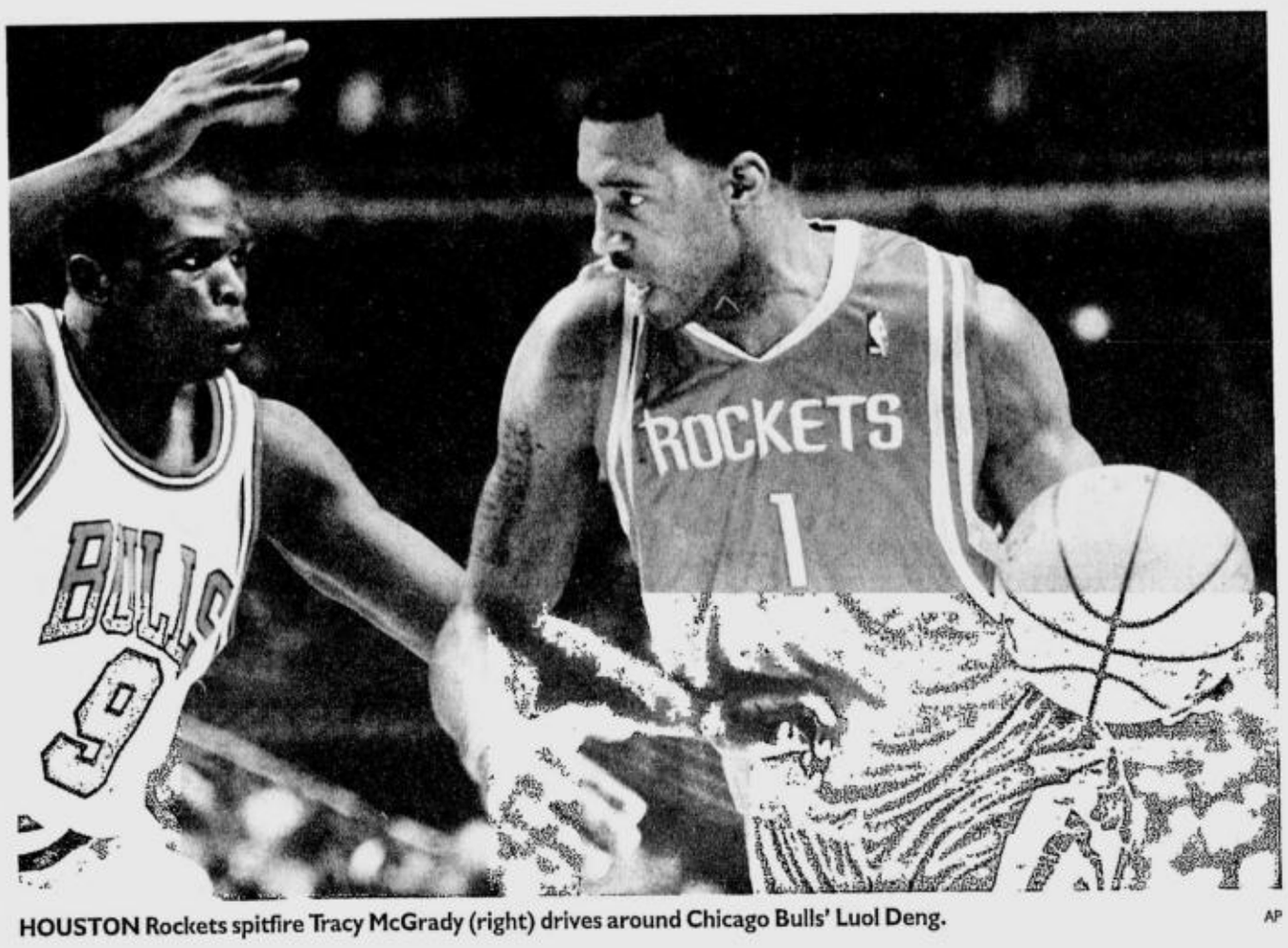
Playing for the first time in three weeks, Cassell scored 10 points during Los Angeles' decisive 17-3 fourth-quarter surge, including a 3-pointer that gave the Clippers the lead for good at 79-77 with 9:12 to play.

Cassell had missed seven games with plantar fasciitis in his left heel and Mobley hyperextended his left elbow last week at Miami.

Desmond Mason led New Orleans with 28 points for the second straight game.

At Denver, Earl Boykins scored 26 points and Allen Iverson had 23 for the Nuggets, who ripped the Milwaukee Bucks, 104-92.

The Bucks were without injured guard Michael Redd and lost his backcourt mate Mo Williams during the game. Ruben Patterson, who played in Denver last season, started in Redd's spot and scored 29 points, three shy of his career high, and had 12 boards. *AP*



HOUSTON Rockets spitfire Tracy McGrady (right) drives around Chicago Bulls' Luol Deng. AP

● **NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV**

9 a.m.—LA Lakers vs. Memphis (replay @ 4 p.m.)

11:30 a.m.—Cleveland vs. Sacramento (replay @ 9:30 p.m.)

Coaching job not for me, says Brown

PHILADELPHIA—BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME coach Larry Brown officially returned to the Philadelphia 76ers on Monday and dismissed speculation he might eventually return to the bench.

After one disastrous NBA season with the New York Knicks, Brown said he wants to help the 76ers only in his new role as an executive vice president.

"I didn't come here to be involved in the coaching," he said. "After last year, I think I need to step away from coaching for a while, and I'm 66. I don't know if that's what I'm looking to do."

Brown, fired by the Knicks in June after going 23-59 and clashing with team president Isiah Thomas in Brown's only season in New York, had been acting as an unofficial 76ers consultant this season. He's kept a low profile in Philadelphia, visiting one practice and attending one game, and offered feedback to team president and close friend Billy King on the Allen Iverson trade.

Brown had a contentious relationship with Iverson, but the two worked together despite several disputes. Brown said he would have been comfortable returning to the 76ers even if Iverson had not been traded last month.

His six years with the 76ers was his longest with any team in his 34-year coaching career. He left to take the job at Detroit and led the Pistons to an NBA title in the first of his two seasons there before his brief stay in New York.

When Brown left the 76ers for the Pistons, he had two years left on a contract that paid him $6 million a season. The 76ers released him from a clause that prohibited him from coaching another NBA team if he left Philadelphia prematurely. *AP*

Despite false info, Serena still scores

MELBOURNE—SERENA WILLIAMS MAY have to remove sister Venus' number from speed dial after some misguided advice left her scrambling to beat Czech Lucie Safarova at the Hobart International on Tuesday.

"I spoke to Venus before the match, she's played her before and she said that she was a tough opponent," Serena told reporters after squeezing past Safarova, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6.

"But Venus didn't give me any good pointers, actually.

"She told me some false information, so I'll be calling her back about that."

The win put Serena into the quarterfinals and went some way toward boosting her confidence following her comeback from a four-month injury break.

Serena, preparing for next week's Australian Open, began well but her game fell apart in the second set and she had to battle all the way to keep her title bid alive.

"It's been a while since I won a tiebreaker and that was in the back of my mind," she said.

"I thought 'I have to win this tiebreaker,' and more than anything that's what I was excited about, even more than winning the match.

"I was really happy to win because I wasn't ready to go home yet," said Serena after booking a quarterfinal spot against Austrian Sybille Bammer.

"I wanted to have at least one more match here before the Australian Open, so I was happy to win."

Bammer romped past second seed Anabel Medina Garrigues, 6-4, 6-3. *Reuters*

Igawa in, Johnson out of Yankees bullpen

NEW YORK—KEI IGAWA PULLED ON his new pinstripes, stepped to the podium and threw his first changeup in the United States.

His long hair freshly trimmed in accordance with team rules, the Japanese pitcher stood before a packed room at Yankee Stadium on Monday and explained—in English—how thrilled he was to reach the big leagues.

"Today, my lifelong dream became a reality: to be a Major League Baseball player," Igawa said, reading carefully from a prepared statement. "I will give you my best as a Yankee. I will do my best to win the championship for this great city, New York."

All set to trade Randy Johnson to Arizona, the Yankees introduced one of his potential replacements during a typically formal news conference attended by about 75 Japanese reporters.

Igawa agreed to a $20 million, five-year contract with New York last month after the club bid $26 million for his negotiating rights. The 27-year-old lefthander spent eight strong seasons with the Hanshin Tigers, going 14-9 with a 2.97 ERA and 194 strikeouts last year.

"We look for him to come in and solidify the back of the rotation," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "I think the fact that he took the time today to learn a bit of English—I think that was just a small indicator of the work ethic that he possesses as he tries to transition over here."

Igawa, who will wear No. 29, admitted he was awed by the moment and very nervous about speaking in English—he practiced his speech for two days. He said he was completely comfortable trimming his trademark long locks to comply with Yankees rules, just as Johnny Damon did last offseason after leaving the rival Boston Red Sox.

"This is the way I was when the season started in 2006, so it's not that different," Igawa said through a translator. "To be able to wear this uniform, there's such tradition and such honor that goes with it. I feel the responsibility." *AP*

Federer's 2007 season target: Grand Slam sweep

MELBOURNE—ROGER FEDERER WILL aim to pace himself in the early part of the year as he bears down on his career goal of winning all four Grand Slams in the same season.

But the ambitious battle plan of the world No. 1 also includes a run at a second consecutive and third overall Australian Open title when the major begins on Monday.

In his usual warm-up, the Swiss heads the field at this week's elite eight-man warmup event at Melbourne's Kooyong club.

Federer opens round-robin play on Wednesday against Czech Radek Stepanek.

Other opening day contests will pit former Australian Open champion Marat Safin against Argentine David Nalbandian, Andy Roddick against Tommy Haas and Briton Andy Murray making his debut here playing Ivan Ljubicic.

That contest will be a re-match of last week's Doha final, which the Croatian won on the way to the title in the first week of the season.

Federer's confident, laid-back approach after compiling a 92-5 season in 2006 remains the same—quiet, intense effort with extreme attention to detail.

FEDERER AP

NALANDIAN AP

RODDICK AP

"My focus is the same as it's been the past few years," the winner of all of the 2006 Grand Slams save Roland Garros said on Tuesday. "It starts with the Australian Open.

"You have to play well here. If I win the Open, then it gets interesting. I'll know in a few week's time if that's a goal that I can aim for."

Federer said that after the major ends on Jan. 28, he will take it easy through February. He has been confirmed for the Dubai event at the end of next month, his next scheduled tournament after Australia.

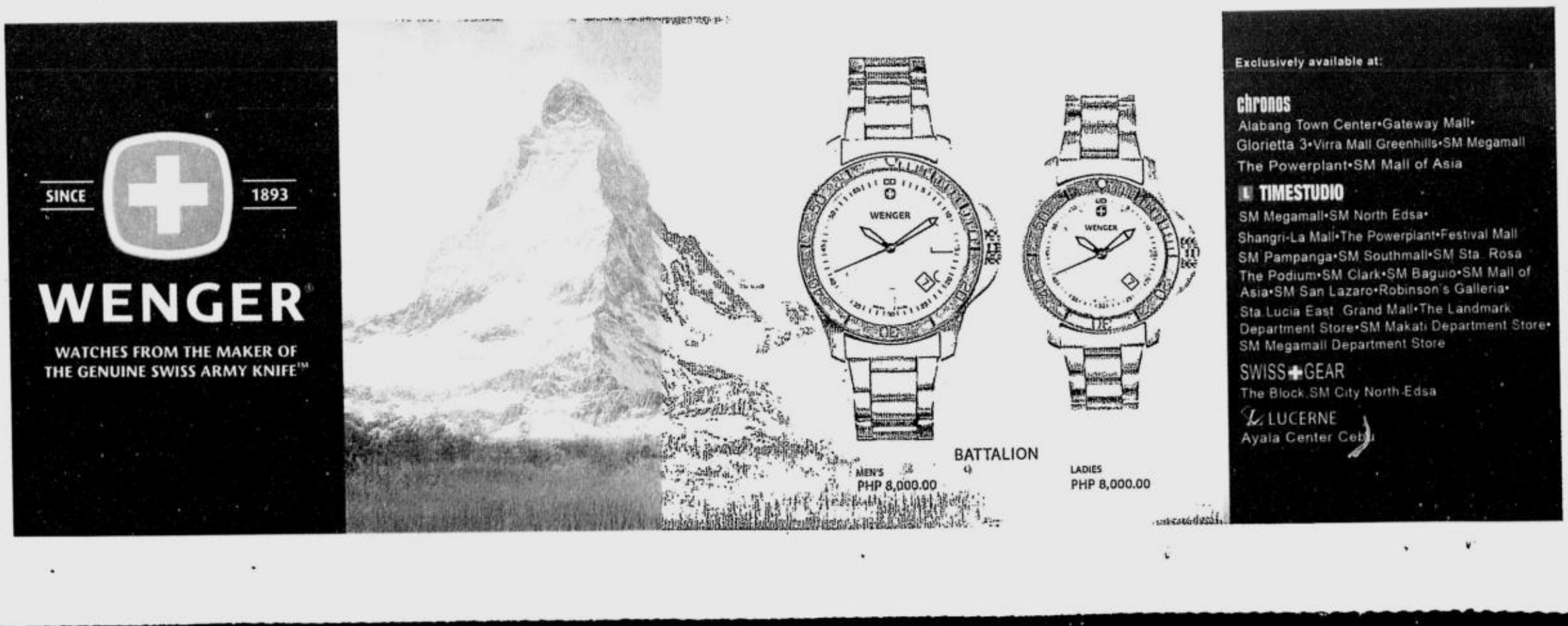
"I have to pace myself more in the beginning of the season, but I'll be playing a lot from February on," he said.

"I have to listen to my body. I was injury-free in 2006, I had a good year and I hope to keep it that way." Despite his odds-on chances of creating history, the modest world-beater is keeping his feet—as usual—firmly on the ground.

"I'm happy to win one or two slams a season. You can't win all the time but I hope to keep it up for a few more years."

Roddick goes into his first full season with legendary coach Jimmy Connors.

"He helped me turn my year around." *AFP*



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Gov't issues $1B worth of bonds

Early float to avoid interest rate risks of May polls

INDICATORS

₱48.66 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 9, 2006

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT FLOATED $1 BILLION WORTH OF bonds in the international capital market yesterday in an attempt to raise in full its foreign, commercial financing requirement for 2007.

Proceeds of the bond float will be used to help plug the expected P63-billion budget deficit for 2007 and settle obligations that will mature this year.

According to a ranking official of the Department of Finance, the government was expected to complete the sale of all the bonds today.

The debt paper carry a 25-year maturity and pricing of the bonds would be announced today, the official said.

Citigroup, Credit Suisse First Boston and Deutsche Bank served as underwriters for the bond issue.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz earlier said the government was keen on the timing of each of its international bond issue as part of its strategy to keep its borrowing costs at a minimum.

The bond float came amid expectations that the government's budget deficit for 2006 was estimated at P80-P90 billion, much lower than the official ceiling of P125 billion.

In January to November, the deficit settled at only P58.3 billion, or 47 per-

GOV'T/ B2

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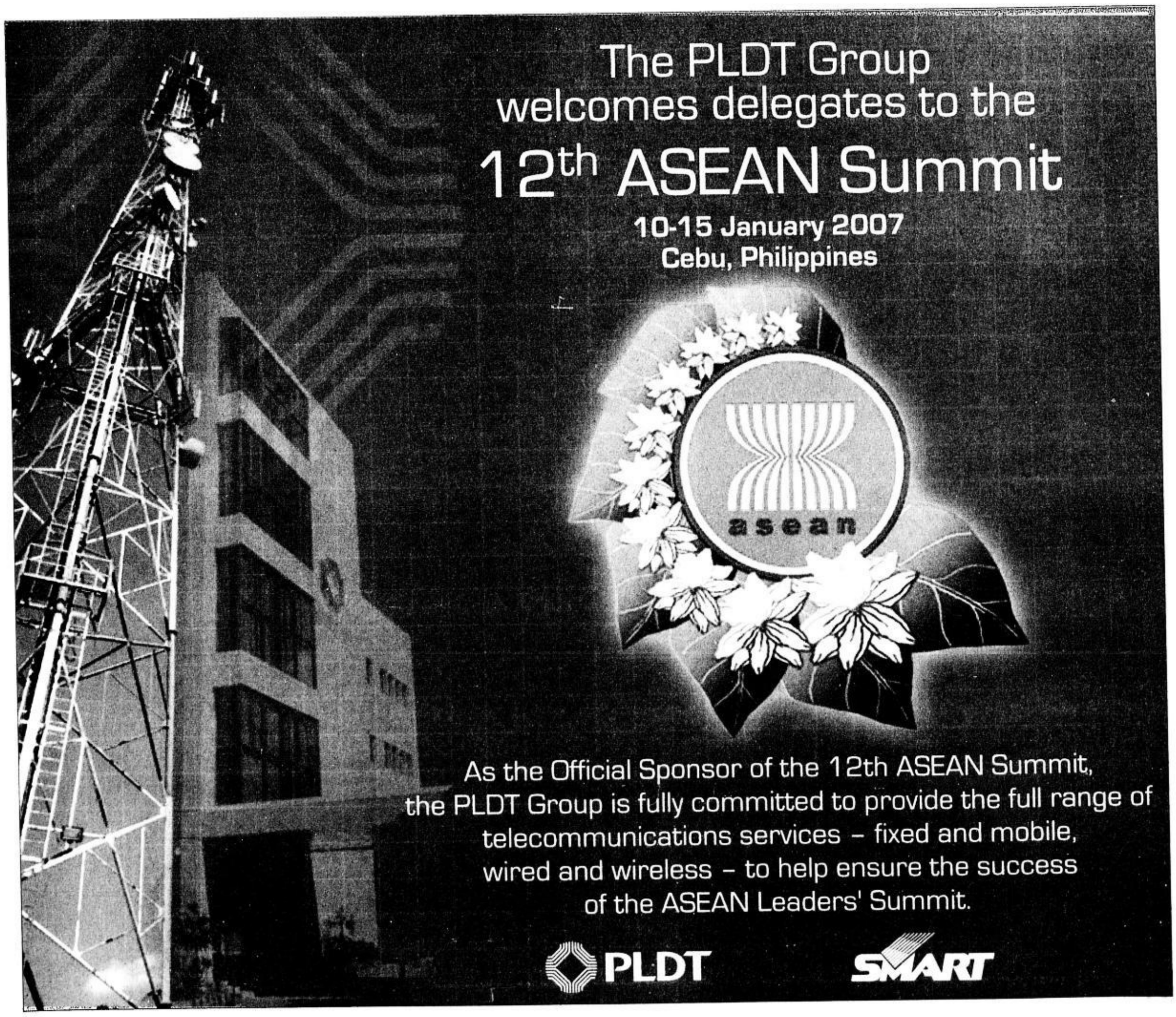
(3) Each fund has its own investment policy and objective to suit clients' investment requirements, horizon and risk preference. A copy of the Declaration of Trust and Plan Rules of each particular fund is available at the principal office of the Trustee.
(4) A Trust fee of 1.5% p.a. and, early redemption fee of 1.0% for redemptions made within the 90-day minimum holding period, applies to the Fund.
) All funds managed by BPI Asset Management are Trust and/or Investment Management funds which DO NOT carry any guarantee of income or principal, and are NOT covered by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC). Past performance is likewise not a guarantee of future results.



Cojuangco quits PLDT board

Former PLDT chair says 'it is the appropriate thing to do'

By Riza T. Olchondra

ANTONIO "TONYBOY" COJUANGco has resigned as board member of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the telco said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The resignation came barely a month after the Sandiganbayan awarded his indirect stake in PLDT to the government.

Attached to the disclosure was Cojuangco's resignation letter.

In his letter dated Jan, 7, Cojuangco said that "it is the proper time, and my decision is the appropriate thing to do."

Cojuangco used to be PLDT chair until Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. in 2002 clinched a 17.2-percent stake and took over the telco.

After the acquisition, Cojuangco sat as one of 11 directors on PLDT's board by virtue of his minority stake in shareholder Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC). Cojuangco had a stake in PTIC through 111,415 shares registered in the name of Prime Holdings Inc. (PHI).

However, on Dec. 12, the Sandiganbayan ordered the PITC's corporate secretary to cancel the 111,415 shares under PHI's name and to issue new certificates in the name of the Republic of the Philippines.

The antigraft court's act was based on a Supreme Court ruling in January last year, in which the high court declared certain PTIC shares as part of the ill-gotten wealth amassed by the late President Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies.

The high court then ordered that the 111,415 PTIC shares be turned over to the government.

With the SC decision, Cojuangco effectively lost his hold on PLDT.

The shares could be acquired by the Manuel Pangilinan-led First Pacific, which already controls PLDT.

First Pacific has a 24.3-percent interest in PLDT, which could rise to 27 percent if it can acquire the shares.

Meanwhile, First Pacific has confirmed plans to indirectly acquire the additional 6.4 percent of PLDT stock through a 14-percent stake in PTIC, which the government is privatizing.

Singapore-based Parallax Capital Management has so far offered the highest bid of P25.3 billion for the PTIC shares. But First Pacific group corporate communications head Sara Cheung confirmed in an email that the company will exercise its right to match the bid.

Lotto equipment supplier gears up for maiden offer

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LOTTERY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER Pacific Online Systems Corp. said it would soon brave the stock market through an initial public offering roughly worth P250 million.

Pacific Online is 42-percent owned by listed homes developer Belle Corp. Abacus Consolidated Resources and Holdings Inc. holds 37 percent, while 20 percent is owned by Malaysian lottery firm Tanjong Group.

Pacific Online chair and president Willy Ocier yesterday said that the IPO, slated for March this year, would consist of primary and secondary, or previously owned, shares which would come proportionately from the three major stakeholders of the company.

Proceeds from the planned IPO will be used to increase the company's terminals by 600 units from the present 900.

Pacific Online plans to purchase the new terminals from Intralot S.A of Greece. It also hopes to put up a second data center in Cebu, which will contain all the software and servers required to run the games.

In 2005, Pacific Online partnered with Scientific Games of the United States to upgrade its online data center in Cebu and install 900 terminals throughout the Visayas and Mindanao.

Pacific Online is the lottery equipment lessor of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office for the Visayas and Mindanao region.

The company reported that gross revenues for 2006 exceeded P400 million, up from P340 million in 2005.

In '07, single-digit mobile penetration growth seen

NEW CELLULAR SUBSCRIPTIONS may only result in a single-digit mobile penetration growth this year, a National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) official said.

NTC common carrier and authorization director Edgardo Cabarrios said in an interview that mobile penetration reached 40 million in 2006 from 35 million in 2005.

The five-million increase in the number of cellular phone owners is very small compared to the double-digit surges between 1999 and 2002, he said.

The cellular business started with Extelcom and the Philippine Telephone Corp. (Piltel) in 1991. PLDT unit Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc. and Islacom Inc. followed suit in 1994.

Text messaging services prompted the cellular phone boom in 1999. Mobile phone subscription peaked in 2000, edging out paging companies such as EasyCall.

"The number (mobile penetration growth rate) would still grow, but not as much as before," Cabarrios said.

The NTC official noted that market saturation and the slow improvement in the financial status of consumers are the major blocks to increased mobile penetration.

One telltale sign is that telcos are not asking for more access codes, such as 0917, 0918 or 0921. About eight million phone numbers can be accommodated in one access code.

He also said broadband would enjoy growth spurts this year, instead of mobile telecommunications services. *Riza T. Olchondra*

System helps victims cope with disasters

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASters will be the first to say that the aftermath of a major flood, earthquake or landslide is a disaster in itself.

There is the extreme difficulty of finding the missing and recovering the dead. There is the chaos that accompanies the management and distribution of relief goods. The worst is responding to discordant calls for help.

Then there are the victims' themselves, those who have to come to terms with the destruction of life and property, and uncertainties over what the future holds.

The victims of the landslide that buried Barangay Guinsaugon in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, however, had a relatively easier time dealing with their crisis.

'Relief'

This is due to the cooperation between IBM Philippines and the National Disaster Coordinating Council, which came together in Guinsaugon to try out new equipment, as well as the Sahana open source disaster management system that IBM donated last year.

Sahana, from the Sinhalese word for "relief," is a free and open source disaster management system developed in the aftermath of the 2004 Asian tsunami.

The Sahana Free and Open Source project was built over three weeks to help coordinate tsunami relief efforts in Sri Lanka by a group of volunteers from the Sri Lankan IT industry, in collaboration with IBM.

Keeping tabs

At Guinsaugon, the Sahana software helped NDCC and local officials keep track of the relief goods that came in droves for the victims. It also kept tabs of the location and number of victims in each temporary shelter set up around the affected area.

The Sahana program was customized for the relief efforts in Guinsaugon by the NDCC, in partnership with the DOST-Advanced Science and Technology Institute, IBM Philippines, the Sahana core team, and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co./Smart Communications Inc.

Former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., who received the donation last year, said that "the NDCC and the Office of Civilian Defense value Sahana's contribution to the relief and rehabilitation phases of the Southern Leyte landslides, and recognize the tremendous boost to our preparedness for future disasters."

Former IBM Philippines country general manager Joaquin Quintos IV, for his part, said in a statement that "while Sahana cannot solve all the problems in a disaster ... it is technology that can help many people."

Saving lives

"There is no greater innovation that matters more than that which saves lives," Quintos added.

Sahana's main applications include a missing persons registry, an organization registry for coordinating and balancing the distribution of relief in affected areas, and a request management system for registering and tracking all requests for support and relief.

FORMER Defense Sec. Avelino Cruz Jr. shakes hands with former IBM Philippines country general manger Joaquin Quintos IV to mark the Sahana software donation.

IBM country communications manager Richard Burgos told the Inquirer that with the successful initial application of the Sahana software during the Guinsaugon relief efforts, IBM had initiated talks with the NDCC for the more widespread use of the Sahana software to cover all disaster management efforts.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

"We are talking with them, and the NDCC has expressed interest in using Sahana as the platform of choice for disaster reform," Burgos said.

This means that the Sahana program will be used not only by the local and national government agencies, but even private sector firms and nongovernment organizations regularly involved in relief work.

Big plans

"In this way, we can avoid duplication of work and all who will input into the program will benefit from it as well," Burgos said.

The Sahana software was used again during the Mayon eruption last year, but not during the aftermath of typhoon Reming due to difficulty getting the equipment to the disaster site.

Nevertheless, IBM has big plans for the Sahana software and hopes that, with the program firmly in place, government agencies and private firms can concentrate more on relief rather than face another type of disaster.

Gov't ...

From page B1

cent of the ceiling for the entire 2006.

Analysts said that issuing bonds early in the year, and with a volume representing the entire amount of its foreign, commercial borrowing program for 2007, helped the government avoid possible volatility in interest rates that might be caused by the elections in May.

Under the government's foreign borrowing program for 2007, it should raise $2.47 billion (or P130.7 billion) from foreign lenders and investors. Of the amount, $1 billion would come from the flotation of bonds and $1.47 billion in the form of official development assistance (ODA).

The Philippines' biggest source of ODAs are the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

The government's domestic borrowing program, meantime, seeks to raise P260.1 billion through the sale of treasury bills and bonds.

The borrowing program for this year represents a borrowing mix of 67:33 in favor of domestic sources of credit.

The $2.47-billion foreign borrowing program for this year is 37.5-percent lower than the estimated $4 billion in 2006. But this year's domestic borrowing requirement of P260.1 billion is 5-percent higher than last year's P247 billion.

Shares close 0.68% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.68 percent higher as bargain-hunting took hold after recent losses, bolstered by falling domestic interest rates and a Wall Street rebound, dealers said.

Benchmark Treasury bill rates dropped to record lows at Monday's auction, driven down by the improvement in the government's fiscal position, which has allowed it to reduce its borrowing.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 20.00 points to 2,972.32 near the day's high of 2,972.80. It hit a low of 2,952.32.

The broader all-share index rose 11.82 points to 1,858.13.

Gainers beat losers 58 to 46, with 56 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 3.72 billion shares worth P2.87 billion ($58.9 million).

During the day, the peso traded at 48.718 to the dollar.

"The low T-bill rates encouraged investors to buy stocks in anticipation of a shift in investor preference towards instruments with better yields as government securities become less attractive," said Mark Alan Canizares of CitisecOnline.com.

Canizares said the drop in T-bill rates was "in line with our expectation of a low interest rate environment this year following the fiscal reforms implemented by the government.

"The market's slide for the past three sessions also provided an opportunity for investors to buy stocks at lower prices," Canizares added. "Other markets in the region were also firmer this morning following a rebound on Wall Street."

Analysts said low interest rates may boost property sales and encourage companies to borrow more money from banks.

Top-traded Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. gained one peso to P53.

The Bank of the Philippine Islands was up one peso at P65.50.

Ayala Land advanced 25 centavos to P15.75.

SM Prime Holdings gained 25 centavos to P11.75.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone was steady at P2,450.

Food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp's A-shares were unchanged at P64, while its B-shares advanced 50 centavos to P75. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Jan. 9, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	57,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	45.5	45.5	45	45.5	398,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	64.5	65.5	64.5	65.5	2,015,400
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,760,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	80	81.5	80	81.5	103,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	52	53.5	51.5	53	6,053,000
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	54	54	54	54	400
Philippine National Bank	45	45	44.5	45	81,500
Phil. Savings Bank	48	48	48	48	32,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	25.5	28	25.5	28	693,400
Security Bank Corp.	66	66.5	65.5	65.5	691,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	48	49	48	49	2,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.72	520,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5	5.1	4.9	4.9	916,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1615	1615	1615	1615	110
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.4	1.42	1.38	1.4	153,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2000	2000	2000	2000	10
Ivantage Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	695,000
INDUSTRIAL LECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.5	40,828,000
First Gen Corp.	54	54	54	54	110,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	68	69.5	68	69	448,100
Manila Electric Co. A	57	57	56.5	56.5	319,100
Manila Electric Co. B	57.5	58	57	57.5	426,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9	9.1	9	9	5,176,000
Petron Corp.	3.95	4.1	3.95	4.1	1,715,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.18	1.18	1.12	1.14	1,032,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	55,000
CADP Group Corp.	2	2	2	2	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc. .	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	15,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42.5	43	42.5	43	366,100
RFM Corp.	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.12	814,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	102,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	150,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63	64	90,000
San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	75.5	74.5	75	203,500
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3	3.1	3	3.1	20,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.16	2.16	1,138,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	2,495,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.16	1.22	1.12	1.14	59,401,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.35	3.75	3.35	3.65	6,392,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	50,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	32,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	9,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.2	249,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	2,904,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.68	0.69	6,830,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.215	0.22	8,860,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	45,000,000
Ayala Corp.	555	560	555	555	144,720
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.63	220,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.7	922,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	1,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.85	477,000
APC Group Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	46,310,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	11,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	3,330,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.45	3.5	3.25	3.35	82,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	17,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	31,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.55	2.85	2.55	2.7	24,084,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7	1,524,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.35	4.85	4.35	4.8	4,820,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	150,000
House of Investments Inc.	2	2.12	2	2.08	3,718,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	820,900
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	740,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.05	4.15	51,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.6	1.62	1,342,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	7,200,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,200,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	40,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	2,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	70,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	16,650,000
SM Investments Corp.	320	320	317.5	320	276,160
South China Resources Inc.	1.08	1.14	1.08	1.1	1,671,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.5	1.5	70,000
Unigil Res. & Holdings Co	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	4,760,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	50,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	12,312,400
Belle Corp.	1.18	1.22	1.18	1.2	6,772,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.7	274,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.52	0.48	0.52	36,960,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	752,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.42	420,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,870,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	160,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.63	0.67	0.62	0.64	136,560,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	338,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	1,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.88	1.72	1.82	75,060,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	200,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.13	2,100,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2,000
Interport Res. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	6,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	140,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.48	0.5	0.47	0.48	4,460,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.71	0.75	0.71	0.73	7,470,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.3	115,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.5	15.5	15.25	15.25	550,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.69	0.71	0.68	0.68	11,420,000
SM Development Corp.	3.1	3.2	3	3.05	5,173,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	6,948,400
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2,800,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	19	19.75	19	19.75	60,700
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2.02	2.02	1.98	1.98	12,761,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1250	1250	1240	1240	19,160
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	4,636,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2465	2470	2445	2450	55,320
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.215	0.215	13,790,000
Ionics Inc.	2.4	2.46	2.4	2.46	2,376,000
IPVG Corp.	3.9	4.05	3.8	3.8	686,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	7,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.32	1.34	554,000
Transpacific Broadband	3.1	3.2	2.6	2.6	3,914,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.034	96,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.68	1.76	1.66	1.76	788,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	22	22.25	22	22	530,800
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.32	1.34	1.28	1.28	303,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.06	2.12	2.06	2.12	2,128,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	60,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.61	590,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	4,000
iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.25	103,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.12	2.08	2.1	412,000
Paxys Inc.	19	19	19	19	30,300
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	526,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	376,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	160,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.9	9.2	8.8	8.9	3,195,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	10,000
Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	100
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	3,890,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	4,180,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	45,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	43,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	1,759,800,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.75	3.85	3.75	3.8	4,452,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.75	17.75	17	17	188,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.72	1,310,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.46	1.46	1.36	1.4	9,595,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	1,260,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	383,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	496,600,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	390,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.08	606,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.8	194,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	172,000
Metro Pac. Inv.- Warrants	4	4	3.8	3.95	391,000

CURRENCIES

January 9, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.767813	1.000000	48.8850
Japan	Yen	0.006467	0.008422	0.4117
United Kingdom	Pound	1.487869	1.937800	94.7294
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098512	0.128302	6.2720
Switzerland	Franc	0.620957	0.808734	39.5350
Canada	Dollar	0.653180	0.850702	41.5866
Singapore	Dollar	0.499228	0.650195	31.7848
Australia	Dollar	0.599292	0.780518	38.1556
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.036586	2.652450	129.6650
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204728	0.266638	13.0346
Brunei	Dollar	0.497611	0.648088	31.6818
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000111	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021568	0.028090	1.3732
UAE	Dirham	0.209066	0.272287	13.3107
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.302400	63.6678
Korea	Won	0.000818	0.001066	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.098223	0.127926	6.2537
ArgentinaPeso	0.249290	0.324675	15.8717	
Brazil	REAL	0.357472	0.465571	22.7594
Denmark	Kroner	0.134193	0.174773	8.5438
India	Rupee	0.017324	0.022563	1.1030
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218595	0.284698	13.9175
Mexico	New Peso	0.070146	0.091358	4.4660
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527707	0.687285	33.5979
Norway	Kroner	0.121032	0.157632	7.7058
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012607	0.016420	0.8027
South Africa	Rand	0.105835	0.137840	6.7383
Sweden	Kroner	0.109794	0.142996	6.9904
Syria	Pound	0.014791	0.019264	0.9417
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023520	0.030633	1.4975

Source: REUTERS' FOREX CLOSING PRICES as of NY Time Jan. 8, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time Closing Rate as of Jan. 8, 2007

Peso sets new 6-year high at 48.66 to $1

Investments in stocks, bond float boost local currency

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY SURGED to a new six-year high of 48.66 to a dollar as the market cheered the influx of foreign exchange from equity investors and the $1-billion Philippine sovereign global bond float.

Despite the fall in benchmark treasury bill rate which usually makes the local currency less attractive, the peso yesterday gained another 18 centavos from Monday's closing rate of 48.84 to finish near yesterday's peak of 48.65 against the greenback.

It was the strongest level touched by the peso since hitting 48.56 on March 21, 2001.

The peso opened at 48.79 and hit the day's bottom at 48.81 before resuming its climb. Trading at the Philippine Dealing System was also heavy at $809 million.

Although the local currency was nearing overbought levels and the peak season for overseas Filipino workers' remittances was ending, the peso has been reenvigorated by expectations of more dollars pouring into the domestic market from fresh government borrowings on top of robust stock market inflows.

The Philippine government announced the sale of $1 billion worth of 25-year global bonds, expected to be the only sovereign issuance out of this market for this year. *(See story on page B1.)*

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the fresh borrowing, which is expected to further jack up the BSP's foreign reserves, was one of the factors mentioned by market players behind yesterday's rally.

Across the Asian region, emerging market currencies were also supported by a firmer Chinese yuan.

"I guess this is still the positive sentiment of the market on the peso and the bearish sentiment on the US dollar. Local inflation is low, and the stock market is doing well," BDO Private Bank treasurer Jose Emmanuel Hilado said.

Hilado noted that at this point, the peso was not reacting adversely to the fall in domestic interest rates as it was not easy to switch to dollar assets due to tedious documentary requirements in buying dollars.

He said the peso would likely appreciation some more but peak at 48.25-48.50 against the dollar.

"The peso will strengthen on the back of sustained inflows of worker remittances, portfolio investments and some prepayment of foreign debt," said Jojo Gonzales, economist at Philippine Equities Inc.

He said the peso's appreciation would be among the four prominent macro themes for 2007 that would further support the equity markets.

The three other factors cited were:

- Inflation will slow further—a result of falling oil prices, a strong peso and assuming no distortions in consumer prices possibly coming from the El Niño dryspell;
- Interest rates will fall largely due to sustained fiscal discipline and despite modest growth in credit demand, and
- The fiscal deficit will remain subdued.

"Revenue growth may slow from 22 percent in 2006 to 12-14 percent in 2007 and despite increased spending, may keep the deficit around P100 billion in 2007 or a relatively modest 1.3 percent of GDP (gross domestic product)," Gonzales said.

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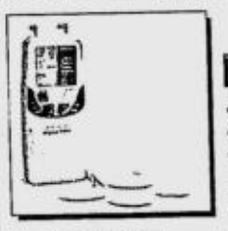
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BSP chief to focus on banks' shift to stiff capital requirements

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. has two major items on his wish list for 2007: for the government to meet the inflation target range of 4-5 percent and for the banking system to hurdle the shift to stiffer capital adequacy standards under the Basel 2 framework.

Tetangco told reporters his wish list for the new year was in line with the BSP's twin mandate to maintain price stability and promote a stable banking system.

After breaching the programmed inflation cap for the last few years, the BSP sees a return to the targeted path this year despite the recent surge in domestic liquidity, which usually fuels inflation as cash-rich consumers tend to spend more.

Tetangco said there was now an emerging delinking between domestic liquidity growth and inflation as the country's inflation rate had slowed down in previous months despite the surge in domestic liquidity during the same period.

Domestic liquidity is the broadest measure of money and is used to estimate the entire supply of money within an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

"We also have a mandate to promote a sound banking system so, (the other wish is for) further strengthening of the financial system through the implementation of the reforms, including the adoption of Basel 2," Tetancgo said.

Starting July 1, the BSP will switch to the Basel 2-based capital adequacy ratio (CAR) framework. The new framework will maintain the minimum CAR requirement of 10 percent but will tighten the capital charges against actual credit exposure, market risk and operational risk.

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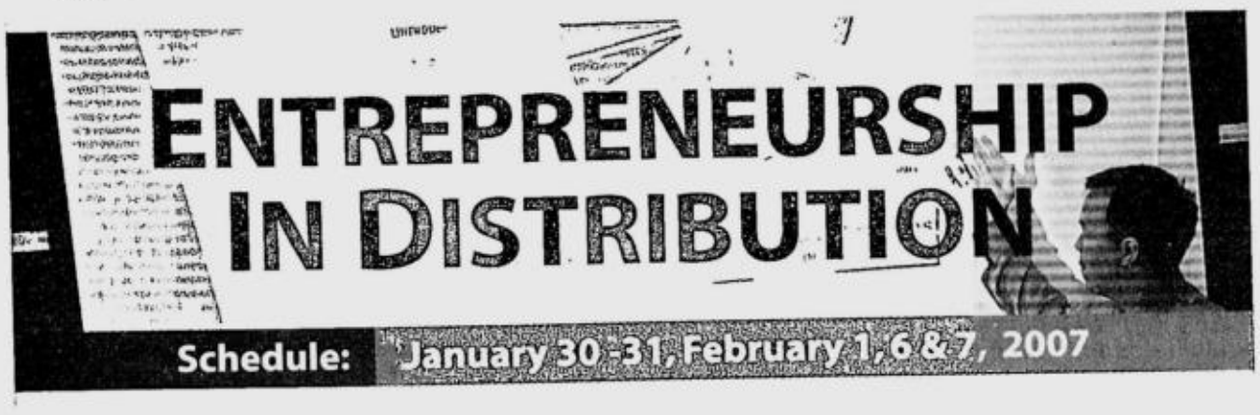
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A 'sweet' proposition whose time has come

By Charles E. Buban

(First of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

WHILE THE LIQUEFIED petroleum gas (LPG) is taking center stage, another type of automotive fuel is slowly being recognized as one alternative that is more sustainable and more appropriate for the Philippine setting.

Indeed, ethanol is seen as an important and emerging source of domestic fuel. It is renewable because unlike petroleum-based fuels, ethanol is produced mainly from plant sources that this country has been growing and harvesting each year (sugarcane, corn and cassava). The fact that even the ensuing agricultural waste could be converted to ethanol makes this source of automotive fuel all the more attractive.

In fact, a number of countries that are without sufficient petroleum deposits are now into fuel farming as their long-term solution to offset energy needs and dependence on imported oil.

And the Philippines could look at one country that is now the world's role model in cutting dependence on imported oil: Brazil.

30 years' experience

In 1975 Brazil started to produce and distribute ethanol for replacing gasoline and with more than 30 years' experience, Brazil is indeed in the pole position to help or at least influence countries including ours.

Pull up to most service stations in Brazil and you will find fuel pumps offering three choices: ethanol, gasoline or premium gasoline.

Interestingly, the gasoline varieties in Brazil are unlike what we Filipinos are so familiar with but blends that contain at least 20 percent ethanol, says Brazilian Ricardo Borges dos Reis, a Bayer Young Environmental Envoy that this writer talked to recently.

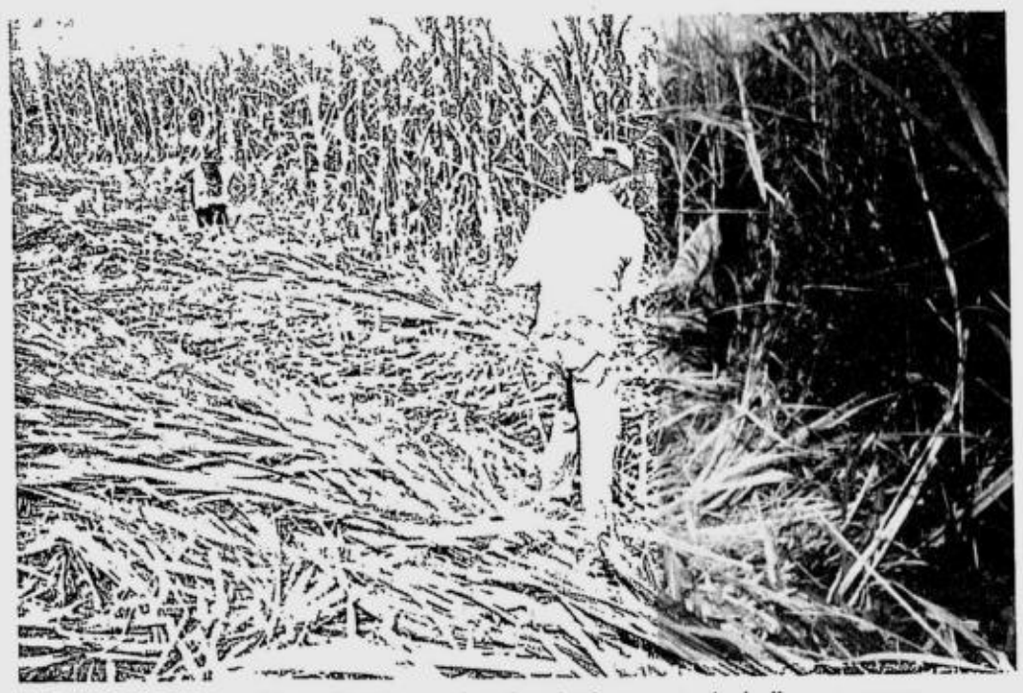
Moreover, he informs that a liter of the pure ethanol in his country is selling almost 50 percent less than its gasoline mixture counterparts.

Gasoline as a last option

No wonder, in this South American nation of 17 million registered vehicles (compared to the Philippines' more than 5 million), gasoline is always the last option.

As many countries, including the Philippines, reexamine their dependence on

Ethanol is seen as an important and emerging source of domestic fuel



ETHANOL is produced from farm crops abundant in the country including sugarcane.

FORD'S recent introduction of its 2.0L Sport and 1.8L Focus flexible fuel vehicles only proves the auto giant's confidence in the Philippines' emerging ethanol industry.

petroleum for fuel (at present, the Philippines imports almost all of its total petroleum supply for vehicles), Brazil offers a model for how to make the switch to sugarcane to produce ethanol for fuel.

But like anywhere else, the debate over the use of ethanol is often cast as a chicken-and-egg question: Which should come first, the vehicles that could run on ethanol, or the places to buy it?

The question was somehow answered when in May 2005, President Macapagal Arroyo launched the National Bioethanol Program and later the National Biofuels Program that mandates that a minimum of 5 percent of ethanol be blended with all gasoline sold in the country within two years of the enactment of the law (2007 to 2010).

Furthermore, it also mandates that within four years upon affectivity of the law, the required ethanol blend level should go up to 10 percent (2010 to 2017).

Energy experts claim that with the program, a total of 3.7 billion liters of gasoline will be displaced by an equal volume of ethanol over a 10-year period.

From this, experts computed that the country will reap a total savings amounting to $825 million (P4.3 trillion) in foreign exchange over 10 years or $82 million (P4 trillion) per year.

With this development, the Philippines joins a family of nations that have turned serious in developing fuels made from plants to decrease dependence on imported oil.

(Next: Promoting the use of ethanol)

Car insurance woes

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

BEFORE YOU BUY COMPREHENSIVE insurance for your new car, be sure to check the Deductible (or Participation) fee you will have to pay in case of damage from a traffic accident. I didn't and I ended up paying more for the repair of my car than the insurance company itself.

To make matters worse, despite its vaunted "Auto-Rapido the most convenient claims procedure!" (exclamation point as in Mapfre Insular's Claims Guide), the insurance company gave me the run-around when I was following up the LOA (letter of authority) to have my car repaired. It turned out later that the delay wasn't entirely the insurance company's fault. It was also the insurance agency's fault, if not more so.

Sideswiped

But let me start from the beginning. My car insurance woes began early evening Dec. 9, a Saturday, when my Hyundai Tucson was sideswiped on the right by a 1985 Mitsubishi Lancer on Edsa while approaching the Magallanes interchange.

The body cladding on the right side doors and right rear quarter panel of my vehicle sustained deep, long gashes while the Lancer's left headlight was busted and its left front fender had scratches.

I immediately called up the Automobile Association Philippines' 24-hour hotline for assistance and while waiting for AAP's traffic investigator Nazario Cueto to arrive, read Mapfre's "What to do in case of an accident" and Auto-Rapido Claims Guide.

The IRF

I followed the insurance company's instructions, starting with the Incident Report Form (IRF) in the policy jacket and reporting by phone the accident to Mapfre's Client Service Center.

When Captain (retired) Cueto arrived, he advised the other driver and me to proceed with him to the nearest traffic police outpost where we could fill up traffic accident forms, narrating our versions of the accident. The following Monday, I photocopied all the required documents and on Tuesday morning submitted them with the IRF to Mapfre's Alabang office. Then a claims adjuster inspected and took pictures of the damaged side of the Tucson.

'Auto-Rapido'

On Wednesday, I faxed the Original Police Report to Mapfre. So by Wednesday, Dec. 13, I had completed all the requirements. Believing Mapfre's "Auto-Rapido" slogan, I thought that I would be receiving the LOA by Friday the 15th so that I could bring my car to Hyundai Makati for repair the following week before the Christmas holidays began.

Then reality struck. Every time I phoned Mapfre to follow up the LOA, I was told that the claims manager was out. The staff who answered the phone invariably sang the same tune: that my LOA would be released as soon as a certain matter was arranged with the insurance broker, Aon Philippines Inc.

Fully paid

I reminded Mapfre that I had fully paid to Aon the P23,567.35 premium and that this was my first claim, but that didn't seem to help. Exasperated, I scrutinized the insurance policy and discovered to my chagrin that the deductible fee I would have to pay was P10,399.50 and the Authorized Repair Limit of Mapfre was only P10,899.50.

Not only that: I also discovered that the "matter" Mapfre was "arranging" with Aon was the latter's nonremittance of my premium payment to them. In short, Aon's delay in remitting my payment to Mapfre was delaying the release of my LOA.

Confronted

When I called up Aon and confronted them with this, the person who took my call wanted to know who had informed me. After I refused to identify the informant, she asserted that the remittance period was an agreement between Mapfre and Aon and that Aon was "still within the remittance period."

In the end, Mapfre had the last laugh. When the LOA was finally released on Thursday, Dec. 21, out of the total P17,439.24 authorized repair cost, Mapfre would pay only P7,039.74 while I would have to shoulder the P10,399.50 Deductible.

Holidays

And since Saturday, Dec. 23, was a nonworking holiday, Christmas Day was Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 26, was also a holiday, it was useless for me to bring my car to the casa for repair on Friday, Dec. 22. I would have to wait until Dec. 27 and hope that the repair work could be finished by Friday, Dec. 29, before the New Year holiday stretch of Dec. 30 - Jan. 02 kicked in.

This year, I will not renew my car insurance policy with Mapfre via Aon. If you were in my shoes, would you?

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: I'd give up chocolate, but I'm no quitter.

* * *

E-mail comments to aida_sevilla@yahoo.com.

Devotion to drive

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

FOR MANY, OPERATING A MOtor vehicle is just a means to an end. Transportation in relative comfort can be had behind the wheel of an automobile, even in the congested streets of our metropolis. Getting from garage A to parking space B is the whole point of their exercise. And to some, guiding a car through our roads is a big enough hassle that the idea of hiring a driver becomes feasible.

Before people get defensive, I have no qualms with the chauffeured set. Manila takes its toll on even those of us who love their time behind the wheel and I'll confess to wanting to sometimes give in to the temptation of having someone else worry about traffic, parking and washing my car. Quite easily, the downward spiral could start there.

Next thing you know, you stop getting behind the wheel altogether and I personally know people who have accepted exile from the driver's seat in exchange for the cushy comfort of the back row. No great sin there. It's just that it would be such a scary thing for me to undertake, the hiring of a professional driver. The possibility of convenience trumping my love for daily driving is truly terrifying to me. Call me weird, call me stubborn but I just have to be behind the wheel.

Fine, if some medical condition prevents me from safely taking the controls of a motor vehicle, there would be no arguments about the matter from me. Please note that I did not say that there wouldn't be any kicking and screaming as they physically tore me away from the steering wheel and the gear shift, but I will try to accept my doom in the most accommodating manner possible.

Something I hold very dear

I really doubt that I am alone in this manner of thinking. Even convenience commuters, those who see cars as mere tools of transportation, would predictably be upset about losing the ability to jump into their vehicles and begin the daily crawl to wherever it is that they go to. Losing one's freedom of movement is a serious matter and is right up there with suffrage, free speech and self-determination.

Ok, I am exaggerating again but being able to choose the time and manner of one's travel is something I hold very, very dear. I'd much rather take a bicycle to work than lose the liberty of moving on my own to wherever it is that I want to go—and this is something that I've been known to do, pack a day smoker and all. The dangers and difficulty just never outweigh the freedom, I guess.

Certifiable

So now I find myself in quite the pickle as I am staring down an almost 3,000-km driving week. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, for the better part of the next seven days, yours truly will be driving the entire length of the island of Luzon—twice over. I would be lying if I said that just the idea of doing an average of 450 clicks a day, and spending an average of 14 hours in the driver's seat is not making me think twice about what I've gotten myself into. It is not as if it is the first time either that I am doing a drive of this distance, over pretty much the same roads. I will miss family and friends. I will miss my San Miguel. Why am I doing this again?

Jun Espino of the Automobile Association Philippines put it directly and quite bluntly at some Christmas party a few weeks ago. He said and I quote, "Andre, it is because you are crazy," and before I could ask why he had decided to come along too, he broke out in one of those wily smiles. So for the record, Mr. Espino and I are certifiable, yet all we did was avoid the real, but honest answer. Why did I really agree to travel such a great distance by automobile then? Mushy and oversimplistic as it may sound, it is just because I love to drive.

RP-China ties to get boost

Manila, Beijing eye $30B in trade

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE OFFICIAL VISIT NEXT WEEK OF Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao is expected to boost efforts of Manila and Beijing to deepen economic ties.

Both countries are seeking to push the movement of goods, services and investments in both directions of the South China Sea to the $30-billion mark within the next five years.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said Wen's visit on Jan. 15-16 highlighted the continuing importance of China as a source of crucial capital for the country's public and social infrastructure projects.

Following a string of investment and trade promotion missions to the mainland in the past three years, Favila said Chinese capital has been committed to or is being considered for ventures in the Philippines, including government's flagship projects in transportation, power, agriculture and mass housing.

Wen's visit coincides with the Philippines' hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' summit as well as meetings with six dialog partners in East Asia—China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

It has been reported earlier that during the meetings, at least 20 major agreements are due to be signed including ones that cover financing and technical cooperation in agriculture, land and rail transport, air transport and bio-ethanol manufacturing.

Favila said closer ties with China had become more significant considering that since accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001, Beijing had taken steps to improve trade-related investment measures and to open up specified sectors that had previously been closed to foreign investment.

He said trade between the Philippines and China had expanded by 41 percent since 2001 with two-way trade amounting to $6.97 billion in 2005 or 8 percent of the Philippines total external trade that year.

PTT, UPS top taxpayers in C. Luzon ecozones

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—Duties and taxes paid by Thai oil company PTT and American cargo forwarder UPS comprised 79 percent of the total P585.1 million collected by the Bureau of Customs in five special economic zones in Central Luzon in 2006.

PTT put in P254.4 million (43.5 percent) and UPS, P208.3 million (35.6 percent), district collector Ronnie Silvestre said at Monday's recognition rites for the six top taxpayers at the Port of Clark.

The port covers Clark, the Angeles Industrial Park in Bacolor, Pampanga; Tipco Estate Corp. in Mabalacat, also in Pampanga; Luisita Industrial Park in Tarlac City; and Sta. Maria Industrial Park in Bulacan.

Trust International Paper Corp. (Tipco) paid P23.9 million; International Wiring Systems Philippines Corp. (IWSPC), P8.7 million; Aero Space Products (API), P7.3 million; and Yokohama Tires Philippines, P7.3 million, according to a report released by Silvestre.

The payments represented duties and taxes on goods brought out of the zones, he said.

Silvestre said the 2006 collections surpassed the target of P583.8 million by 0.23 percent.

Of the 450 companies based in the five ecozones, less than 50 sell goods to the domestic market. Most manufacture products for export. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Filinvest to pour $47M in residential projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY DEVELOPER FILINVEST Land Inc. expects to raise at least $100 million from the sale of shares this month, and $47 million will be spent on residential projects.

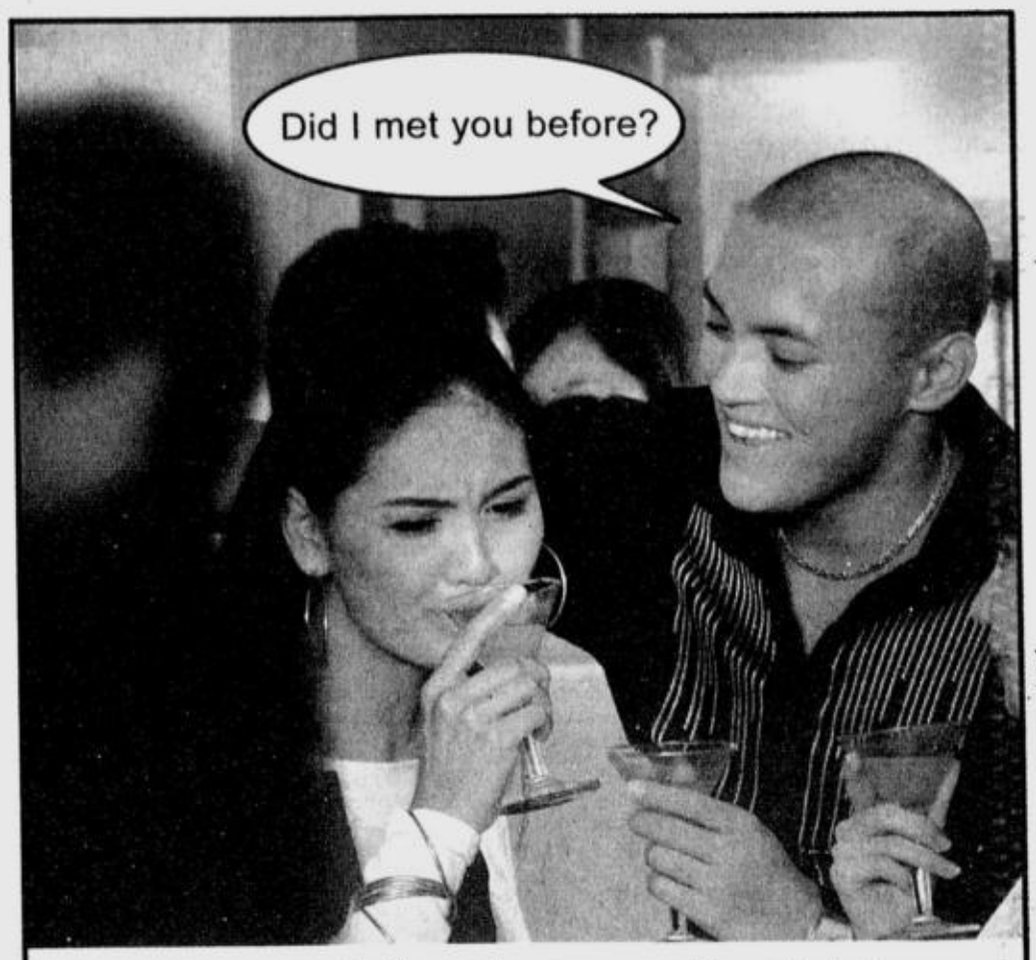
Sources familiar with the deal said another $19 million will be invested in the Northgate Cyberzone, the Filinvest Group's information technology park in Alabang; $12 million for a condotel in Cebu and $7 million for a five-story middle income housing development in Metro Manila.

FLI is set to launch 14 housing projects this year in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Tarlac, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Cebu, Davao and General Santos.

FLI said it would sell the bulk of the offered 5.4 billion common shares to foreign investors in Hong Kong, Singapore, London, Germany, New York, Boston, San Francisco and Washington.

The roadshow to drum up investor interest in FLI's shares started last Monday and will end on the 19th.

About 3.7 billion of the offered shares are new and up to 1.7 billion shares will be offered by Filinvest Alabang Inc. (FAI), which owns 37 percent of FLI.



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The first of a series of economic forums from the
FMIC and UA&P
Capital Markets Research Center

Catching the INFRASTRACTURE TRAIN
19th of January 2007, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m
Ballroom 3, Mandarin Oriental, Makati City

Highlights

Government Infrastracture Program: Priorities and Bottlenecks
Hon. Arthur C. Yap
Secretary
Department of Agriculture & Development Champion for the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle

Financial Gains and Prospects of the Philippine Economy
Hon. Roberto B. Tan
Undersecretary
Department of Finance

The Philippine Economic Outlook
Mr. Victor A. Abola
Economist
University of Asia and the Pacific

Asian Regional Perspective
Dr. Andrew F. Freris
Chief Economist for Asia
BNP Paribas

Panel of Discussants

Hon. Arthur C. Yap
Secretary
Department of Agriculture & Development Champion for the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle

Hon. Roberto B. Tan
Undersecretary
Department of Finance

Hon. Diwa C. Guinigundo
Deputy Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Mr. Francisco C. Sebastian
President
First Metro Investment Corporation

Mr. Victor A. Abola
Discussion Moderator

The event is by invitation only

Republic of the Philippines
CEBU PORT AUTHORITY
CIP Complex, Serging Osmeña Boulevard, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City
E-mail : cpa@cpa.gov.ph
Telephone : 232-1461 to 63 • 231-6856 to 57
Fax No. : 231-6848

RE-INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY/APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cebu Port Authority, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City, invites accredited and duly registered contractors to participate in the public bidding of the following projects :

Name of Project: CONSTRUCTION OF ROCK CAUSEWAY AND R.C. DECK WITH RORO RAMP @ TANGKE, TALISAY CITY

A. Scope of Work :
1. Supply and Install Core Rocks : V=8794
2. Supply and Install Armour Rock for slope protection and dyketoe
3. Supply and Install Armour Concrete block (9,103 cu.m.)
4. Supply and Install grouted riprap with Concrete Facing
5. Supply, Spread and Compact Base Materials
6. Concreting of Road Pavement, including Cutting, Curing and Sealing 3,500psi @ 28 days (0.25 m)
7. Supply and Deliver : 0.35 x 0.55 x 10.0m (12 pcs.) 4000psi @ 28 days, Concrete Piles : 0.35 x 0.55 x 18.0m (15pcs.) (Q=390L.M.)
8. Driving of R.C. Sheet Piles Q=318 L.M.
9. Chipping of Pile Butts for Anchorage Q = 27 pcs.
10. Reinforced Coping Beams V = 9.6 cu.m. 4000psi @ 28 days
11. Cast and drive 0.45 x .045 x 0.45 x 28 LM RC Test Pile/eq. (5000psi @ 28 days) 1 unit
12. Cast and Deliver 0.45 x 0.45 x 25m R.C. Piles (Vert. piles = 35 pcs. = 1035 L.M.) 0.45 x 0.45 x 20m (Bat. piles = 8 pcs.)
13. Driving of Vertical and Batter Piles, Square Holing and Supports (992 L.M.)
14. Chipping and Cutting of Pile Butts to Cut-off Level and Disposal (43 pcs. Conc. Sheet piles)
15. Supply and Install Pre-cast Slabs 3500 @ 28 days (28 cu.m.)
16. Forms and Rebars for Beams, Tenderwalls, Curb and Cast-in-place Slab (48,090 kgs.)
17. Concrete Pouring, Curing and Stripping of Forms = 4000psi (210 cu.m.)
18. Installation of Mooring Fixtures (7 units)
19. Installation of Steel Fenders
20. Installation of Tire Fenders
21. Safety and Security Signs and Gears

B. Classification : Medium A for Ports

C. Equipment Requirements :

1 unit Payloader (wheel type) 0.90 cu.m. cap.	- Owned
1 unit Aircompressor with Breathing Apparatus	- Owned
1 unit 25T Crane with Clamp Shell	- Owned
1 unit Road Grader (125Hp)	- Owned
1 unit Road Roller (static, self propelled 10mt. cap.)	- Owned
1 unit Water Truck	- Owned/Leased
1 unit Concrete Screeder	- Owned
1 unit Concrete Barge	- Owned/Leased
3 units Concrete Vibrator (3 Hp.)	- Owned
1 unit Concrete Cutter (1 in. min. cutting depth)	- Owned
2 units Engine-driven Welding Machine 200amp.	- Owned
1 unit Crawler / Truck Mounted Crane (35T)	- Owned/Leased
1 unit Diesel Hammer (D35/eq.)	- Owned
1 unit Aircompressor (185cfm)	- Owned
2 units Jackhammer	- Owned
1 unit Drop Hammer (2T)	- Owned
1 unit Barge Mounted Crane (50T cap.)	- Owned/Leased
1 unit Tug boat (850hp)	- Owned/Leased
1 unit Drop Hammer (3T)	- Owned
1 unit Feeder Crane (35T cap.)	- Owned/Leased
1 unit Flat Truck	- Owned
1 unit 45 KVA Generator	- Owned
1 unit Crane with bucket	- Owned/Leased
1 unit Boom Truck	- Owned

D. Estimated Project Cost : P34,511,888.00
Source of Funding : CPA Corporate Fund
Cost of Prequalification or Eligibility Statement : P1,000.00
Issuance of Prequalification or Eligibility Statement : January 15 - 18, 2007
Deadline for Submission of duly accomplished Prequalification or Eligibility Statement : January 26, 2007

Prospective bidders shall submit to the BAC Chairman of this office their duly accomplished Prequalification or Eligibility Statements in **HARD/BOOK-BOUND** form. Prequalification or Eligibility Statements submitted other than **Hard/Book-Bound** form shall not be accepted.

Bid securities in the form of surety bond, Callable on Demand, can be secured from the GSIS or other private insurance & surety companies duly accredited by the office of the Insurance Commission.

Prospective bidders shall submit the necessary documents or evidence to prove ownership of equipment and the duly notarized lease contract indicating the brand, serial number, capacity, and present location of equipment being leased.

Prospective bidders are required to present the original copy of Contractor's License/Certificate of Renewal and IAC Classification and Registration for verification/authentication before Pre-qualification or Eligibility Statement shall be issued.

Bidders who have been qualified for the bidding of this project need not re-apply for eligibility again. However, said bidders will be required to submit a letter of intent if they will still be interested to join in the bidding. The new schedules on the issuance of the revised plan, the pre-bid conference, and the dropping and opening of bids will be given to these eligible bidders.

All particulars relative to prequalification, bidding, evaluation of bids, and awards of contracts shall be governed by the provisions of R.A 9184, and other rules and regulations as may be applicable.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **MARIO G. TAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted by :

(Sgd.) **ANGELO C. VERDAN**
General Manager

(PDI--Jan. 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
AMIRCO INTERNATIONAL CORP. Sta. Ana Drive, Sun Valley, Parañaque City	Fadi A. Attieh	Vice President for Operation
RADOVIL TRADING LTD. CO. 1175 La Torre St., Binondo, Manila	Huiyao Shi	Assistant Manager
RADOVIL TRADING LTD. CO. 1175 La Torre St., Binondo, Manila	Guodong Huang	Supervisor
FUJI MACHINE PHILIPPINES, INC. Alabang Zapote Rd., Almanza Uno, Las Pinas City	Koichi Kato	Deputy General Manager
SILLA STAR HANDICRAFTS INC. #4 Mia Rd., Tambo, Parañaque City	Wonsik Ra	Finance Manager
UNILEVER PHILIPPINES INC. 1351 UN Ave., Paco, Manila	You Marie Yolande Oga	HR Business Partner, Supply Chain
UNILEVER PHILIPPINES INC. 1351 UN Ave., Paco, Manila	Sanjiv Soshil Mehta	Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI – January 10, 2007)

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Read Classifieds

More Classified Ads:

BFAR A2
BFAR A6
Supreme Court (JBIC) A6
TESDA A16
NIA A16
National Immigration Authority A16

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID WAREHOUSING SERVICES FOR NFA REGION VII
LEASE OF A MAXIMUM AGGREGATE AREA OF 15,577 SQ. METERS FOR GRAINS WAREHOUSE STORAGE SPACE

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, through its *Corporate Budget for 2007* intends to apply the sum of PESOS: ELEVEN MILLION SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED EIGHTY EIGHT (Ps. 11,600,788.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the lease of a maximum aggregate area of 15,577 sq. meters for grains warehouse storage space for NFA Region VII.

Lot #	Province	Location	Projected Volume to be stored in bags	Aggregate Area (sqm)	Rate/Sqm	Total ABC (Pesos)	Bidding Fee (Pesos)
1	CEBU	Cebu City	600,000	13,333	P 82.00	10,933,060.00	20,000.00
2	NEG. OR.	Dumaguete City	80,000	1,800	P 22.00	396,000.00	3,000.00
3	BOHOL	Tagbilaran City	20,000	444	P 61.20	271,728.00	3,000.00
	TOTAL			15,577		11,600,788.00	26,000.00

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY now calls for the submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) from potential bidders to apply first for the accreditation of the warehouse(s) intended to be leased as grains warehouse storage space for NFA Region VII prior to the issuance of Bidding Documents.

Interested Bidders shall submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) to the BAC Secretariat together with the following warehouse accreditation requirements: a) Certificate of Occupancy; b) Proof of Warehouse Ownership; c) Floor Plan of Warehouse; and d) Location Map / Sketch Plan.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat, NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, Banilad, Cebu City. The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY will issue the complete set of Bidding Documents only to prospective bidders who had been issued a Notice of Warehouse Accreditation by BAC and upon payment of a non-refundable amount indicated in the above table. The Bidding Documents shall be reviewed personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedure using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidders must have a Largest Single Contract that is completed and accomplished within the twelve month period from 2004 up to the present which is similar in nature and the value thereof must be at least 50% of the ABC of the lot/lots to be bid. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening. Following is the schedule of bidding activities:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE (Date/Time)
1. Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI)	January 11, 2007 - January 15, 2007
2. Issuance of Notice of Accreditation/ Non - Accreditation	January 15, 2007 - January 18, 2007
3. Issuance of Bidding Documents	January 18, 2007 - January 24, 2007
4. Pre-Bidding Conference	January 26, 2007 @ 9:00 AM
5. Opening of Bids	February 07, 2007 @ 9:00 AM

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than a precentage of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid, in the following schedule and form or any combination thereof:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of ABC to be Bid
Cash/Cashier's/Manager's Check Payable to NFA issued by a reputable commercial Bank in Cebu or	One Percent (1%)
Surety Bond issued by GSIS marked "Callable on Demand"	Two & a Half Percent (2.5%)
Notarized Bank Guarantee	One & a Half Percent (1.5%)

Bids will be opend in the presence of the Bidders or their respective representatives who choose to attend the bidding. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Availability of the leased warehouse is required upon receipt of Notice to Occupy until December 31, 2007, or upon completion of withdrawal of stocks by NFA whichever is applicable.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY reserves the right to accept most advantageous to the government or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
RAUL B. CHONG
Banilad, Cebu City
Tel # 032-232-1939
email address: nfaro7@cvis.net.ph
Fax # 032-233-6095
website: www.nfacebu.net.ph

(Sgd.) RAUL B. CHONG
RBAC Chairman / ARD

(PDI--Jan. 10, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Department of Science and Technology
Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)

P R No PMO-06-0902 & 0903
Doppler Radar Pedestal & Building
PAGASA Central Office
Funding Source – SARO # B-06-07663

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PAGASA, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites registered PhilGEPS suppliers/ manufacturers/ distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Proposed Doppler Radar Pedestal Tower & Building (Phase – 2)
Location : Peoples Park, Tagaytay City

Qty./ Unit	Brief Description	Approved Budget For the contract	Price Validity	Contract Duration
Lot 1	Proposed Doppler Radar Pedestal Tower (20 Mtr)	P 5,378,851.80	90 cal. days	98 cal. days
Lot 2	Proposed Doppler Radar Building for (Phase – 2) General Finishing	P 1,560,443.39	90 cal. days	70 cal. days

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule/ Time	Venue
1. Period of Advertisement/Posting of IAEB	January 10 – 17, 2007	
2. Submission of Letter of Intent and Issuance of Bid Requirements & Bidding Documents	January 10 – 23, 2007	General Services Sec. 3/F PAGASA Central Office Bldg.
3. Opening Eligibility Requirements	January 24, 2007 / 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Amihan Conference Rm. 2/F PAGASA Central Office Bldg.
4. Pre bid Conference	January 24, 2007 / 2:00 p.m.	
5. Opening of Bids - Envelope I Envelope II	February 5, 2007/ 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. February 5, 2007 / 2:00 p.m.	
6. Bid Evaluation & Post-qualification	February 6 – 12, 2007	
7. Notice of Award	February 26, 2007	

Interested parties may avail Bid Requirements and Bidding Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee equivalent to 0.2% of the approved budget per item in no case lower than P500.00 and not more than P1,000.00 to the PAGASA Cashier, upon presentation of this advertisement clipping, together with the Company's TIN.

The PAGASA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) PRISCO D. NILO
Chairman PAGASA-BAC

(PDI--Jan. 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
3rd Flr., PCA Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Department of Agriculture invites bona fide suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITEMS TO BID: APPROVED BUDGET CONTRACT PhP1,960,000.00

1 lot Server
2 units Laptop

The bid documents shall be available at the BFAR Property Section starting **January 15-19, 2007** upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of P500.00.

Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals in three envelopes must be submitted at the BFAR-BAC Secretariat, PCA Compound, Diliman, Quezon City not later than 2:00 PM on February 02, 2007 and shall be opened at the Office of the BFAR-BAC Chairman, 3rd Flr. PCA Bldg., Elliptical Rd., Diliman, Quezon City, on the same date in the presence of the participating bidders.

For more information, please call the BAC-Secretariat at Tel. No. 426-3168.

BFAR reserves the right to waive any formality in the response to eligibility requirements and to this invitation. BFAR further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director

(PDI - Jan. 10, 2007)

Tesda hold national TVET conference

THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND Skills Development Authority (Tesda) in partnership with the Technical Vocational Schools Association of the Philippines (TEVSAPHIL), the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP), the Liga ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas, Jobs.DB and the National Capital Region's local TVET associations will hold a National Technical Vocational and Training (TVET) conference at the Manila Hotel on Jan. 10, 2007 from 1-6 p.m. to discuss new directions in the TVET sector. The theme of the conference is "Optimizing TVET Opportunities for 2007 and Beyond."

The conference will highlight the new way of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to revolutionize technical vocational education and training through the Ladderized Education Program (LEP). This program was established under Executive Order No. 358 enjoining Tesda and Ched to allow learners to progress between technical vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education (degree programs) and vice-versa. The program provides for recognition of credits taken from both TVET and degree programs.

The conference shall also introduce e-TVET as a supplemental/alternative training delivery system that makes use of computers and the internet to provide wide access to learning technical-vocational skills and competencies for the masses. Don Bosco Makati shall demonstrate the features of e-TVET whose development was funded by the Consuelo Foundation. Jobs.DB will provide inputs on enhancing job facilitation for the graduates of TVET. Ched commissioner Nona S. Ricafort will discuss the overarching principles and policies of LEP. Manila City Mayor, Hon. Lito L. Atienza, Jr. shall give a message as host to the conference.

The TVET Conference will be concluded by the signing of the Memorandum of Agreements of Tesda with the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, TEVSAPHIL, Liga ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas and the Vice-Mayors' League of the Philippines to promote and expand the implementation of technical vocational education and training in the country.

OBITUARIES

Death Notice

MERCEDES OLALIA REPALDA
(Sept. 24, 1947 – Jan. 6, 2007)

Passed into eternal life in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 59.

Her remains lie in state at her residence at No. 30 Mabini St., Mangatarem, Pangasinan.

Interment will be on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2007 at St. John Memorial Gardens after the 9am Mass at St. Raymond de Piñafort Parish.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

FR. CIPRIANO E. UNSON, S.J.

was called home to the Lord on Monday, 08 January 2007.

Wake : Oratory of St. Ignatius at Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila University Campus, Loyola Heights, Q.C. Daily Mass at 8:00 P.M.

Funeral Mass : at 8:00 A.M. on Friday, 12 January in the Oratory of St. Ignatius, Loyola House of Studies.

Interment : Sacred Heart Novitiate Cemetery, Novaliches, Q.C. immediately after the Funeral Mass.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF HIS SOUL.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC
CHANGE OF NAME
Notice is hereby served to the Public that **Ocean Fast Ferries, Inc.** has filed with Maritime Industry Authority for a change of Vessel Name from **M/V BLUE SKY** to **M/V OCEAN JET-7.**
(PDI-Jan. 10, 2007)

WANTED
ACCOUNTING GRADUATE
Female, 20-35 yrs. old, w/ pleasing personality
Jackarde Hotel
#8 Gemini St., Pamplona Park, Las Piñas City
#874-4339 / 5244
Bring Resumé w/ picture

JOB HIRING
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• Male/Female
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Tel. 733-4564 to 65

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Alumni Homecoming

The UST College of Nursing Class '57 will hold its Golden Jubilee Alumni Homecoming from Jan. 26 to 28, 2007.

You are cordially invited!

For more details, you may call Donna at 634-7570 or 634-7571

NORBERTO T. ESCALONA, SR.

Has reunited with our Father on January 8, 2007 at the age of 71.

His beloved wife: **VIOLA SISON NAVA**

CHILDREN : Marivic & Boyet de Guzman
Christine & Roby Garcia
Violee & Mike Montenegro
Terry N. Escalona
Becky & Tony Pio de Roda
Noric & Mavie Escalona
Ellen & Richie Diaz
Angel & Bimboy Ignacio

GRANDCHILDREN : **Katrina, Kamille, Robertino, Joaquin, Cai, Gabriel, Nico, Maica, Javi, Meg** and **Martel**

His remains will lie in state at the Chapel of the Risen Lord, Parish of the Hearts of Jesus & Mary, Bulletin St. cor. Daily Mirror St., West Triangle, Quezon City until January 12, 2007, 9:00 a.m.

Interment details will be announced later.

The Directors Officers and Staff of

ESNA FINANCING AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION
ESNA REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Announce the demise of its Founder and Chairman

NORBERTO T. ESCALONA, SR.

who peacefully joined our Creator on January 8, 2007 at the age of 71.

His loving wife, **Viola Sison Nava,**

Children: **Marivic** and **Boyet de Guzman, Christine** and **Roby Garcia, Violee** and **Mike Montenegro, Terry N. Escalona, Becky** and **Tony Pio de Roda, Noric** and **Mavie Escalona, Ellen** and **Richie Diaz, Angel** and **Bimboy Ignacio.**

Request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel of the Risen Lord, Parish of the Hearts of Jesus & Mary, Bulletin St. cor. Daily Mirror St., West Triangle, Q.C. until January 12, 2007, 9 am.

Interment details will be announced later.

EDUARDO AZCONA GUTIERREZ
December 18, 1938 - January 4, 2007

Predeceased by parents Horacio J. Gutierrez (†) and Isidora Azcona Gutierrez (†).
Survived by siblings Marilou and Percy Bonganay, Nena and Victor; children: Roxanne, Marjorie and Christophe, and Edward, nephews and grandchildren.

Funeral Mass followed by burial to be held at Santuario de Santo Cristo, Blumentritt Street, San Juan at 2:00 p.m. on January 12, 2007.

Lina Lozano Atienza, 70

MANILA SOCIAL WORKER AND CIVIC LEADER MRS. LINA LOZANO Atienza died on Monday, Jan. 8, 2007 at the age of 70. She was due to turn 71 on Jan. 26, 2007.

Atienza served the Manila Department of Social Welfare for more than two decades until her retirement. After this, she persistently pursued her work particularly for the benefit of senior citizens and unfortunate elderlies.

She was the widow of businessman Benjamin Atienza Sr, and is survived by her children Butch, Bernie, Baltie, Barbie, Aline and Bambi, her children in laws Ruth, Judith, Tito and Boysie, 17 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Her remains lie in state at the Funenaria Paz, Manila Memorial Park in Sucat Parañaque. Interment will be on Sunday, Jan. 14 after the 9 a.m. Mass.

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I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6

BUSINESS

Group of doctors putting up medical facility in Subic

Baypointe targets medical tourists and Zambales residents

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—A GROUP OF doctors mostly from St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City plans to build and operate a modern medical facility inside this freeport.

Amado Manuel Enriquez Jr., Baypointe Inc. president, said the company would cater to medical tourists and that it believed Subic freeport a good location for this.

Baypointe operates eight hospitals in Metro Manila and Calabarzon.

Enriquez signed a contract with Subic Coastal Development Corp. last week to sublease a portion of the Moonbay Marina area.

The contract signing on Jan. 6 came a day after the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, in a board meeting, approved Baypointe's business proposal.

The hospital, which will be constructed on a 3,000-square-meter lot in the Moonbay Marina area, will have advanced medical and clinical laboratories, as well as a wellness center that will service both local and foreign patients.

Marianito Fernandez, SCDC chair, said the 12,000-sq.m. meter hospital would cater to residents of Olongapo City and the surrounding communities in Zambales and Bataan.

The hospital will also compete internationally and "that is what sets it apart from any other tertiary hospital in the area," he said.

Roberto de Leon, Baypointe medical director and a consultant for the James L. Gordon Hospital in Olongapo City, said Baypointe Hospital and Medical Center would have first-class facilities and state-of-the-art equipment.

Baypointe is a corporation organized by 40 individuals, mostly doctors from Metro Manila.

SCDC's Moonbay Marina has been attracting a number of prospective locators, engaged in various types of businesses, in the area in the last three years.

Fernandez said the entry of Baypointe would change the way health care was delivered to the SBMA employees, locators and tourists who flock to the freeport every year. *Ansbert Joaquin, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Globe, HK firm launch special SIM for OFWs

By Riza T. Olchondra

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS BASED in Hong Kong can now call and text home at much lower rates as Globe Telecom Inc. teamed up with Hong Kong mobile outfit CSL to bring the lowest mobile IDD rates to Globe & Touch Mobile (TM) users through a special SIM (subscriber identification module).

The CSL-Kumusta Ka Kababayan SIM allows OFWS in Hong Kong to avail themselves of special international call or IDD rates, send load credits to a Globe or Touch Mobile subscriber in the Philippines through the international share-a-loan service, and send cross-border remittance through GCash Pera to Pamilya, Globe said in an announcement.

"That means they can transfer funds and prepaid credits to loved ones as if they were just sending a text message," the company said.

Globe chief operating advisor Andrew Buay said in a statement, "We are extremely pleased to have launched our cross-border GCash offering with CSL. This represents Globe's first direct overseas mobile operator deployment where mobile subscribers can now use their CSL SIMs to more closely manage and take more direct control of their peso-denominated remittances and other GCash transactions sent periodically from Hong Kong to their loved ones or participating GCash merchant partners in the Philippines."

IDD rates for calls placed to Globe and TM stand at HK$0.70 per minute during weekends and HK$0.95 per minute on weekdays, about 25-percent lower than the rates offered by other cellular providers in Hong Kong.

Low inflation, interest rates cut gov't tax collection in '06

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT LOST P25.2 BILLION IN potential tax collection due to the lower-than-expected inflation and interest rates last year.

In a statement, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the government had assumed a 6.9-percent average inflation rate and a 7.9-percent average interest rate for last year.

However, the actual average inflation rate was only 5.2 percent, while the average interest rate on government securities was 6.1 percent.

This dragged down the government's tax collection, the DOF said.

Last year's low interest rate meant lower-than-assumed consumer prices, which translated to lower value-added tax collection.

The lower-than-expected interest rate means lower tax collection on income from government securities.

Teves said the drag-down effect on tax collection by the slower-than-programmed inflation rate was P10.2 billion. The lower-than-expected interest rate, he added, pulled down tax collection by P15 billion.

The DOF said the better-than-expected macroeconomic figures were among the reasons for the shortfall in the government's tax collection. The BIR collected P646.9 billion in taxes in 2006, lower than the official target of P675.4 billion.

Another DOF official said the BIR collection shortfall was also due to efficiency problems.

While critics point to corruption and inefficient tax administration for the shortfall, Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag insisted the shortfall was largely due to factors that were beyond its control.

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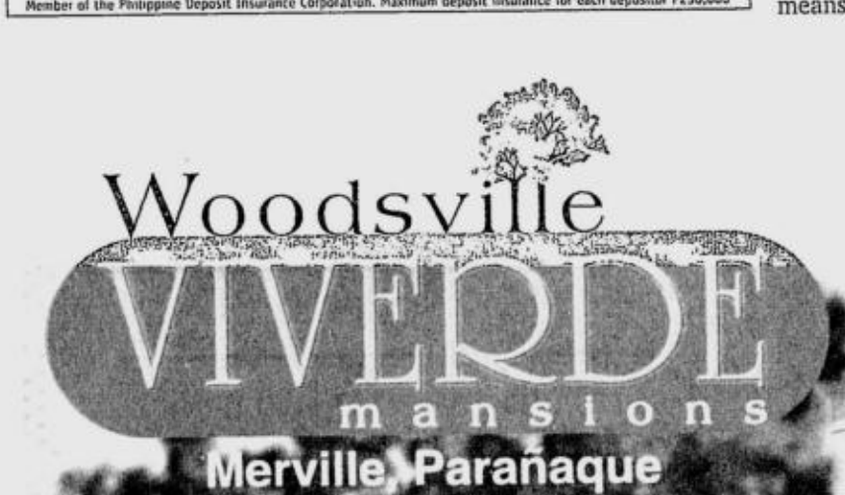

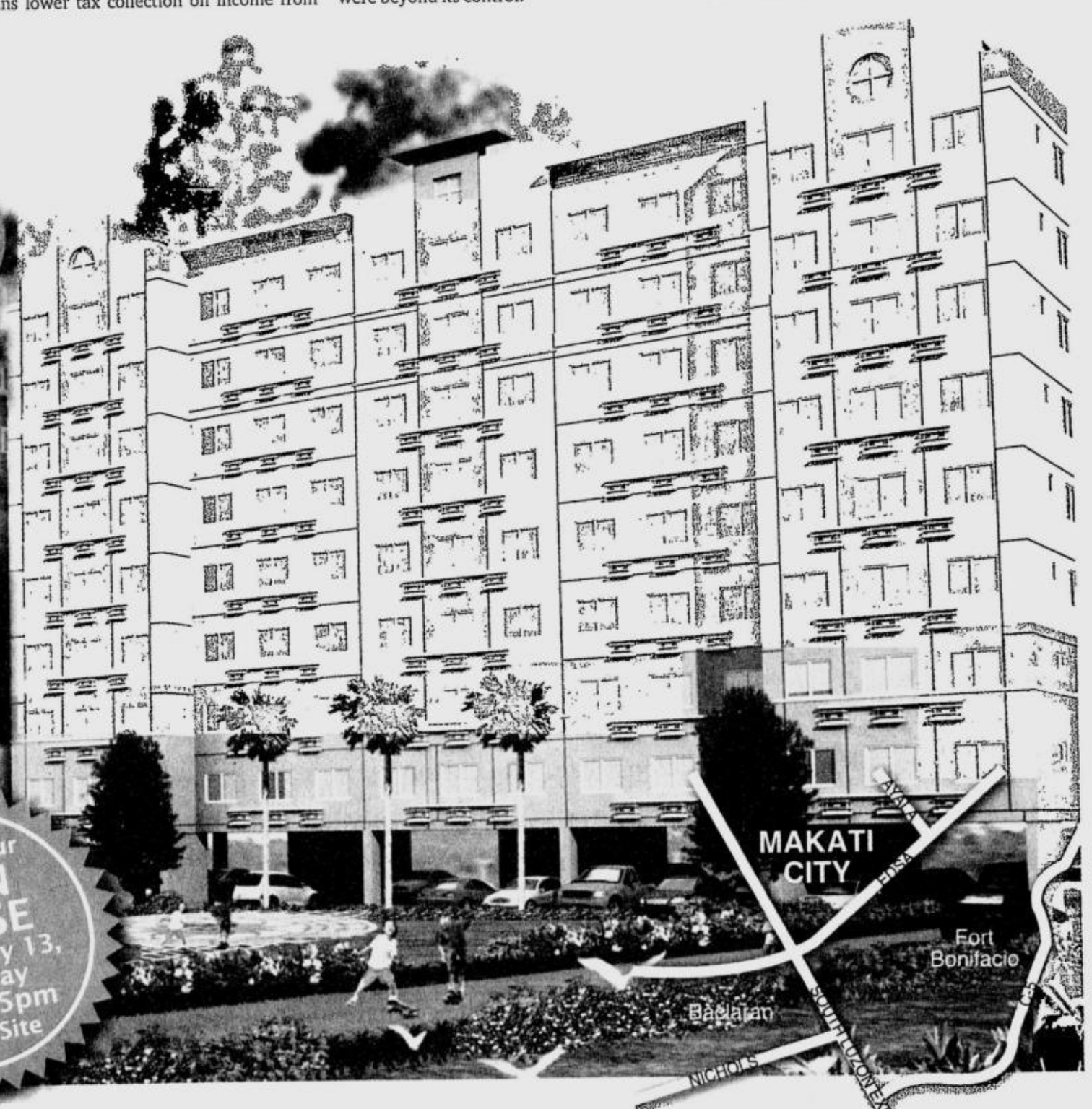

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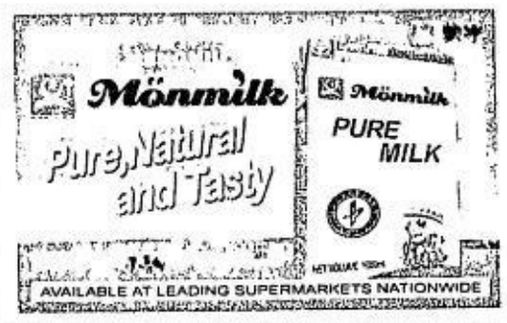
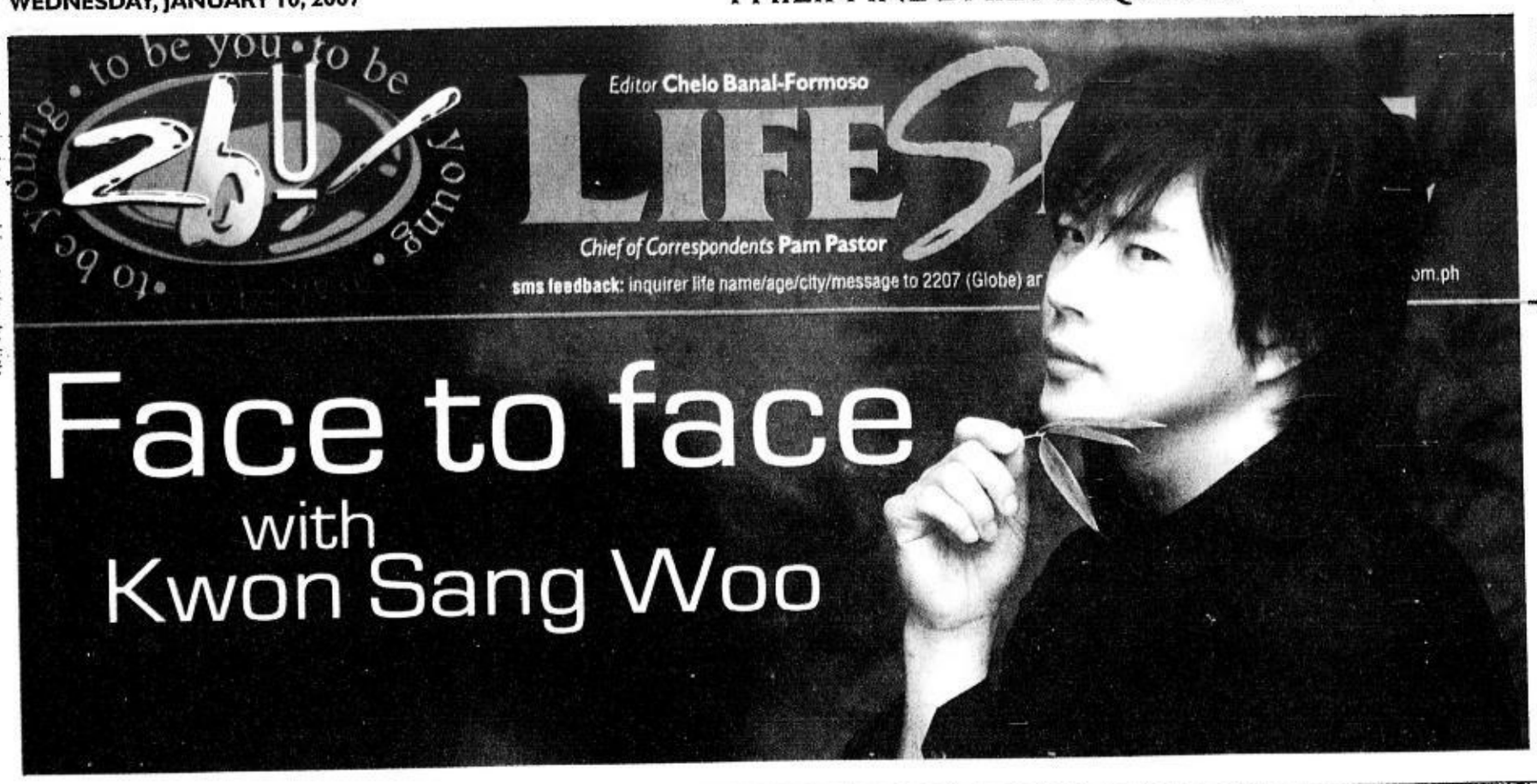


Face to face with Kwon Sang Woo



This Korean actor and The Face Shop endorser believes in a lot of things—natural beauty, taking care of yourself and holding on to your dreams

By Pam Pastor

WHEN KWON SANG WOO packed for his recent visit to Manila, he made sure he included a pair of swimming trunks. "I know the beaches are beautiful here. It's a relaxed place, good for resting."

Sadly, the Korean star had little time for resting and swimming. Kwon spent his few days in Manila promoting The Face Shop, getting to know his fans at insanely packed mall meet-and-greet sessions and painting houses for Gawad Kalinga.

Huge billboards announced his planned visit, and Koreanovela fans held their breath in anticipation. When Kwon, Korean actor and endorser of The Face Shop, finally arrived in Manila, he did not disappoint. He was as charming and as lovable as the character he plays on television.

Known to Pinoy fans as Cholo, a popular character on the Koreanovela "Stairway to Heaven," Kwon is famous not only in his own country but throughout Asia. His visit to the Philippines was just one of the stops of his Asia-wide tour last December.

Kwon said he had a lot in common with Cholo. "We are the same when it comes to his passion when he's in love and how he jokes a lot around with his friends. I really identify with the characters I play."

Kwon is also the face of The Face Shop, South Korea's No. 1 cosmetics and skincare brand. According to Jung Woon Ho, chair of The Face Shop, Kwon was chosen because "He was the hottest actor in Korea—he still is. His image is clean and his reputation is very healthy."

Clean, fresh and positive

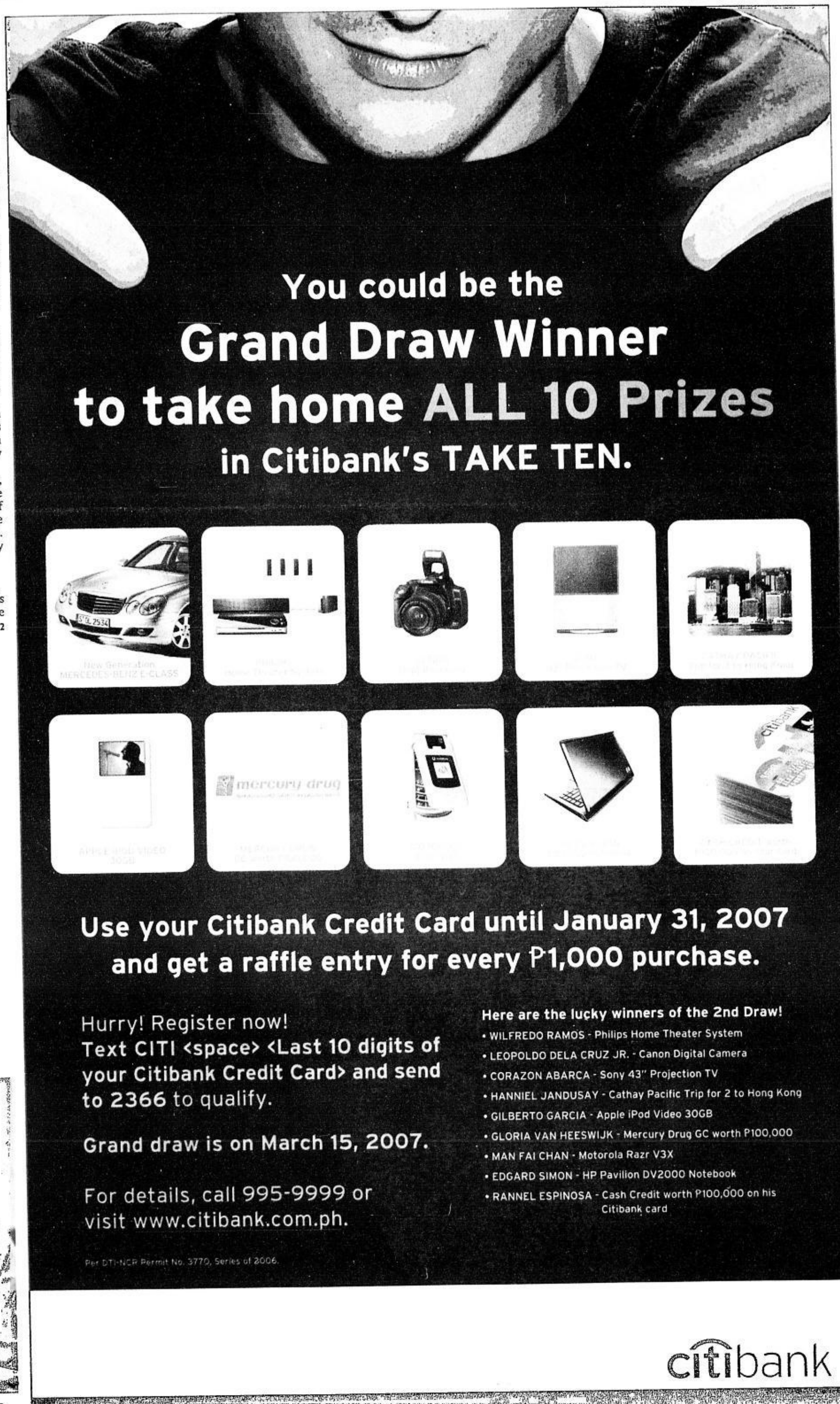
Kwon said his role as The Face Shop's spokesperson gave his fans the chance to see

FACE/ C2

GREENER Hair Fruits shampoo and conditioner in Apricot

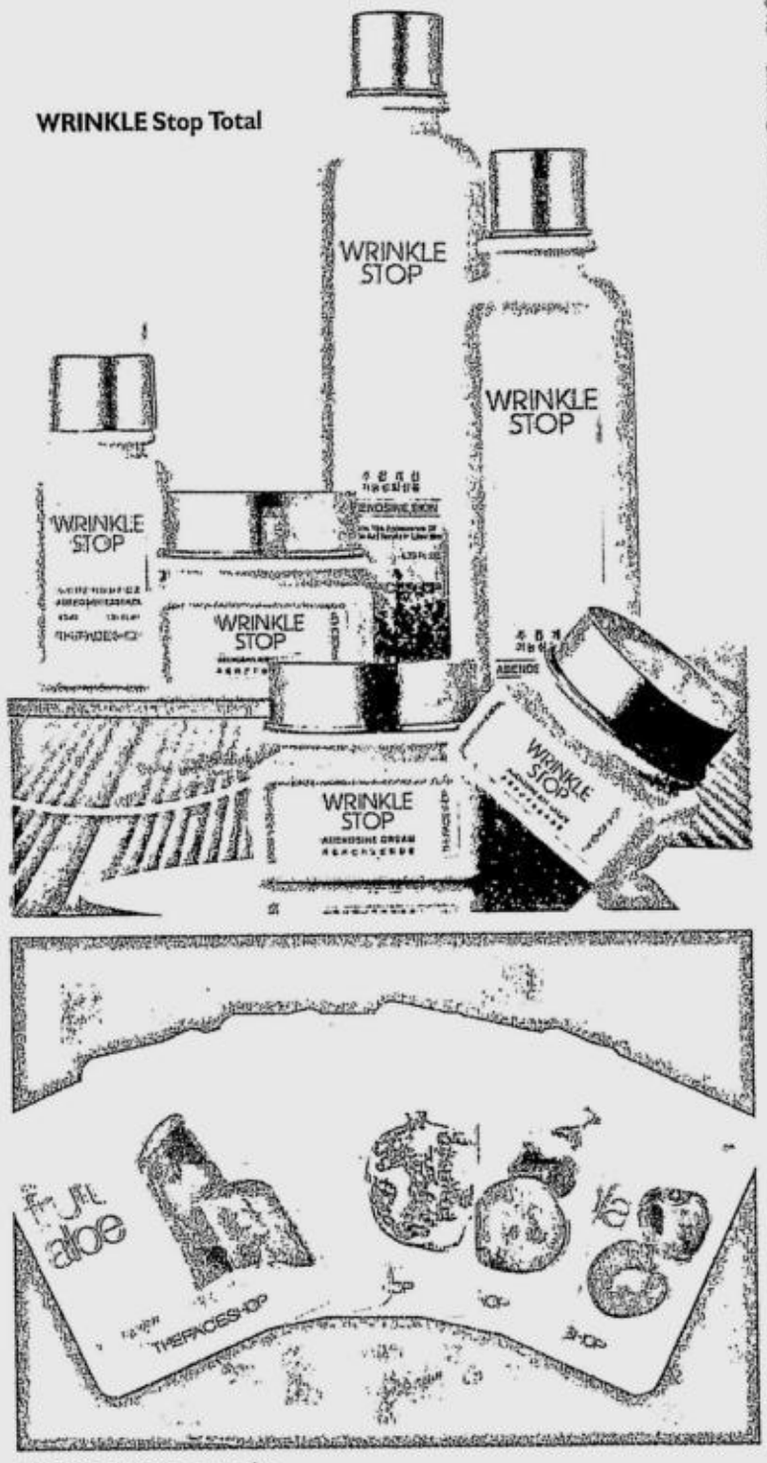
PURE for Man gift set

KWON Sang Woo during his recent visit to Manila ROMY HOMILLADA



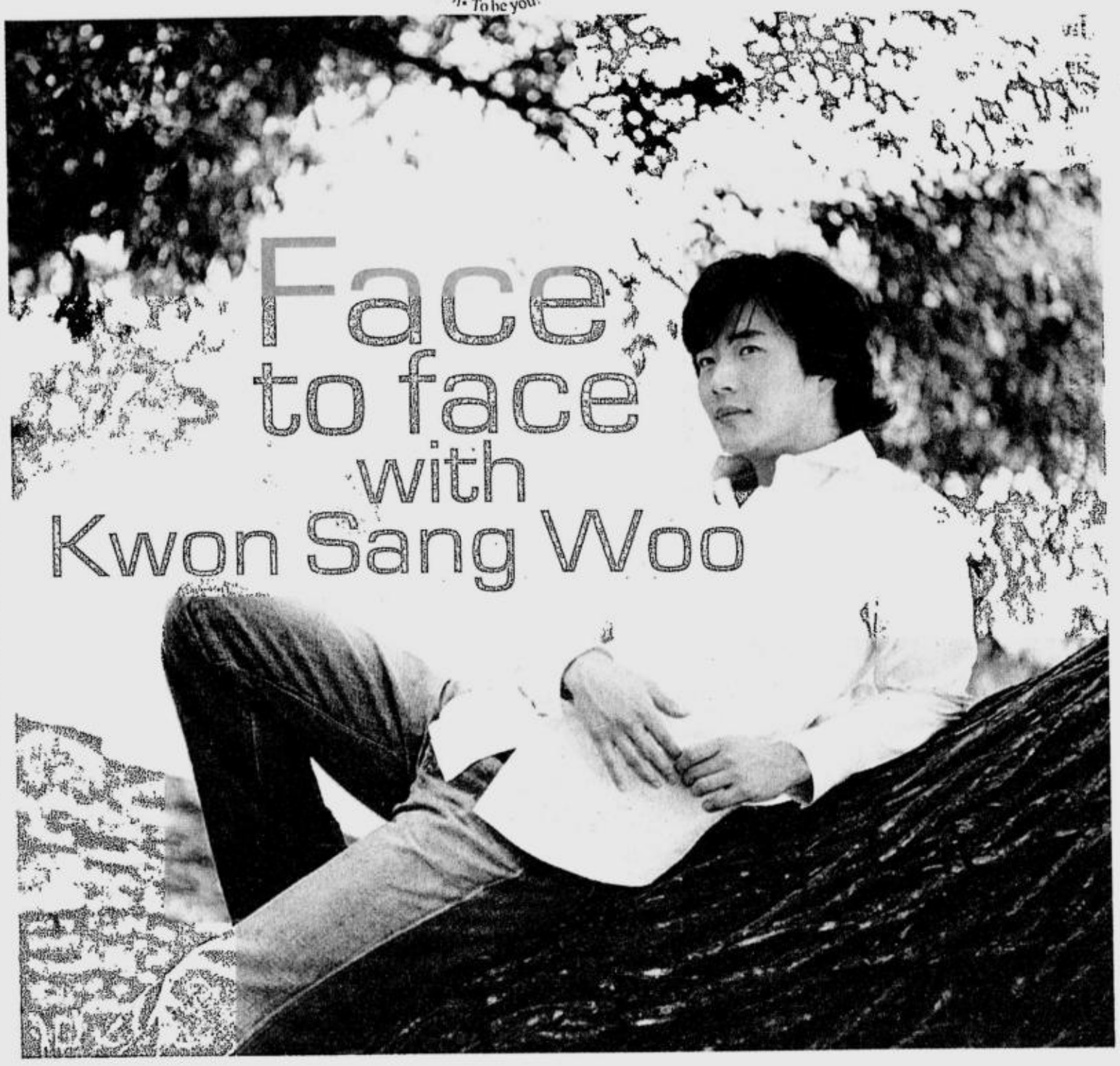
WHITE Tree Vita Spot Corrector

WRINKLE Stop Total



FRESH Fruit face masks

Face to face with Kwon Sang Woo



From page C1

another side of him—different from the manly and sexy roles he occasionally played. "The products work for me. And it's a way for people to see my clean, fresh and positive side."

The brand, which has 400 stores in South Korea and 88 around the world including in the United States, Canada, Australia and Taiwan, found a new home in the Philippines last year thanks to Ben Chan's Suyen Corp.

"As a brand that is an ambassador for naturalism, we are working hard to spread the gospel in the Philippines and in the world as well," said Jung Woon Ho.

The Face Shop offers over a thousand products made using 600 ingredients. Best-selling products in the Philippines include the Quick and Clean and the White Tree lines, and the various mask sheets, which are a favorite of Kwon, too.

At first it seems unusual for a skincare brand to use a man as an image model, but after discovering Kwon's passion for cleansing and dedication to taking care of himself, everything made complete sense.

Beauty regimen

He has genetics (he says his mom has great skin, too) and his beauty regimen to thank for his flawless skin.

"Cleansing is very important. I'm very picky with my cleansing products. I use facial foam and warm water then I rinse three to four times with cold water. I also use lotion and skin essence. Aside from using the products, I make sure I get enough sleep and I go for treatments when there's time."

Kwon doesn't just make sure his skin is in top condition, he takes care of his body, too.

"I work out two to three times a week. I drink a lot of water. I don't really deprive myself. I eat what I want, but in moderation. I don't eat heavy meals at night and I eat a lot of fruits."

He doesn't consider it vanity, just part of the job. "I don't think I'm vain. But I'm really supposed to take care of myself because of work."

He believes all men should do the same. "Guys who don't take care of themselves wouldn't end up with pretty girls," he said. He thinks men who refuse to try skincare products are being silly. "All it takes is 10 minutes. It's so easy to do."

He gave one tip for girls who want their boyfriends to start taking care of their skin more. "Just drag them to the nearest Face Shop outlet."

Gawad Kalinga visit

During his visit to the country, Kwon also went to a Gawad Kalinga village being built in Tondo. The Face Shop made a donation and he helped paint houses.

"The kids had a special presentation. I was very touched. Despite the surroundings, they were bright, happy and hopeful. Thanks to this project, the kids will have a stable environment. I wanted to tell them that despite their surroundings, they should keep their dreams alive. They will survive."

He also had a chance to spend time with some Koreans who have chosen to make the Philippines their second home.

"I met a Korean woman who told me she loves the Philippines and that it's a good place to live in. I'm happy to be able to come and say hello to Koreans who are away from home."

Kwon has since said goodbye to Manila, but he said he intended to come back.

"As long as I have fans in the Philippines, I would love to go back. I'd go back with my family for personal pleasure."

And hopefully he'll have time for a good swim then.

The Face Shop is located at Glorietta 3, Bonifacio High Street, The Block-SM North Edsa, Robinsons Galleria and SM Mall of Asia. Shops will also open soon in Eastwood Citiwalk, Shoppesville Greenhills, SM Pampanga, Robinsons Ermita and Shangri-La Plaza.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Kwon Sang Woo tips

KWON SANG WOO ON THE FACE SHOP: "It offers quality products for affordable prices." Check out his favorites—they might become yours, too.

For men only. Kwon relies on The Face Shop's Pure line to keep his skin hydrated. The line, which purifies the skin, controls excess sebum and tightens pores, includes a toner, emulsion, shaving foam, oil and fragrance made for men with rough and sensitive skin.

Basic skincare. Quick and Clean is a must-try skincare line, both for men and women. It is a quick solution to breakouts and blemishes, and includes a foam wash, sebum control toner, whitening mist, sun cream, hydro fluid and first-aid gel.

Skin masks. The Face Shop is popular for its seemingly endless array of masks —some you can wash off, some you can peel off. Not only does Kwon Sang Woo find them a lot of fun, he also uses them to prep his skin for big events.

Viva Vista!

Here are some of the many innovations to look forward to when the Microsoft software is released this February

By Gabriel H. Mercado
2bU! Correspondent

REMEMBER THE tail-wagging dog that popped out when you used Search on Windows XP?

Apparently, his name was Search Assistant, and if you had looked more closely, he was actually reading a book backwards, which might explain why your computer was taking so long to look for something.

He isn't on Vista anymore, and while that may be sad to some, a better indexed Search has replaced him, one that promises to be faster than ever.

But that's not all that's new with Windows Vista. Here are some of the many other innovations to look forward to when the software is released this February:

Four Vistas to choose from. There are four types of Vista intended for retail distribution, named according to their intended use: Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Business and Vista Ultimate. Some applications such as the highly touted Windows Media Center are available on the home models, while applications that help in sharing documents like Windows Meeting Space are a staple in the Business model.

Same price as XP. Rumors of higher prices are false. The Windows Vista Full Package product costs about as much as XP, with Home Basic priced at $199, Home Premium at $239, Business at $299 and Ultimate at $399 (prices from the Microsoft website).

There are special pricing schemes available for upgrading, volume purchases and academic editions. XP will continue to be available for a time, as well as the support for it.

Parental controls. Vista Home Premium and Home Basic both have a powerful feature that lets parents decide such things as how long kids can use the software, what games they can play on it, what websites they can view. It can even generate reports on what their kids are doing online.

Access basic info without turning your PC on. You're late for a meeting but you've forgotten where it was and would have to turn your laptop on just to check. Annoying, right? Well, the Windows Slideshow is a feature of Vista Home Premium, Business and Ultimate that displays recent e-mail messages, addresses and telephone numbers on an auxiliary display without turning your computer on. This innovation will probably spawn a whole new generation of 'Vista–ready' laptops and PCs with small LCD displays on their casings, keyboards, remote controls or other devices.

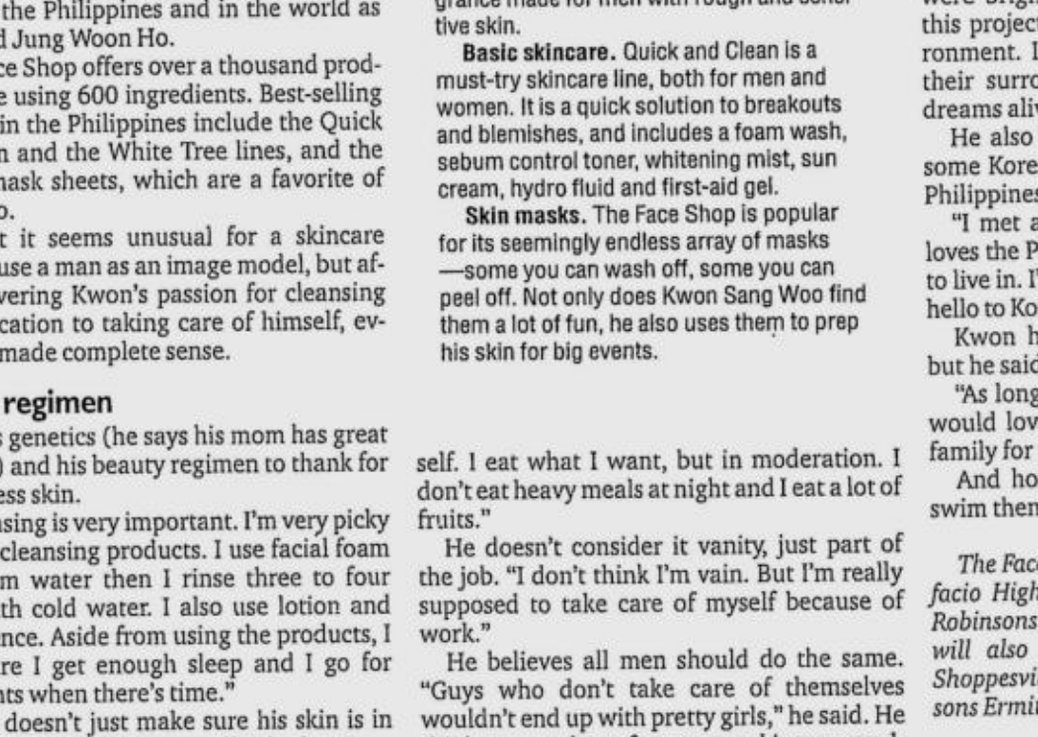


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Powerful Vista needs powerful PC. If you purchased your PC or laptop two or more years ago, I suggest you get a new one to run Vista properly. If you bought one more recently, then you might get by with an upgrade. The 'premium specs' on the Microsoft website require a 1 GHz 32 or 64-bit processor, 1 GB of RAM, a DirectX 9 capable 128mb video card, and a DVD-R drive, among other things. Of course you can get by with the 'minimum specs' listed on the site, but if you want to really enjoy Vista's great new features, then go for the above.

Windows Aero, Live Taskbar, Flip 3D. Windows Aero is the name of the terrific, slick new interface on Vista, highlighted by transparent glass-like elements. It will also note your PC's specs and will adjust accordingly. The Live Taskbar Thumbnails will give you a small window of a running application in the taskbar, and Flip 3D is a godsend for people who want to run multiple applications (like me). Alt + Tab used to do this before, but now you can use Flip 3D to obtain a 3D view of the open windows using your mouse's scroll wheel.

Security. Long known as XP's waterloo, security has become a paramount Microsoft concern in Vista. The software giant strikes back with a stronger User Account Control to help you better manage who gets to tinker with the computer's inner workings. The new IE7 can also run in 'protected mode,' while data encryption facilities make a stolen laptop's data useless to anyone but the owner. Lastly, a toughened firewall checks both inbound and outbound traffic.

Sidebar and gadgets. Where you used to get a plain wheat field in XP, the Vista Sidebar and Gadgets interface now gives you quick access to gadgets like picture slide shows, Windows Media Player controls or news headlines.

You pick the gadgets you want to see in the Windows Sidebar, and you can also download from websites that are expected to develop updated versions.

Jack 'n Jill 50th anniversary promo winners

HERE ARE THE WINNERS OF 2bU! and Jack 'n Jill's *barkada* photo competition that celebrates our favorite snack brand's 50th anniversary! The grand prize winner receives a *barkada* trip: four round-trip Cebu Pacific tickets to any local destination, while two runners-up will each receive T230 phones with P1,800 worth of Sun Cellular Sure Load. Winners may call Melody Cabanilla at 7513805 for their prizes.

GRAND prize winner: Mycha Gerochi and friends
My friends and I really love hanging out, of course with our favorite snack, Jack 'n Jill! After every class we would buy loads of Jack 'n Jill Chippy, Tostillas, Nova, V-Cut and Piattos and just have a great time together. Sometimes we would bring it to our class and have our mini-picnic right there. We just can't resist it!

RUNNER-UP
Pearl Perlada and friends

JOAN Marie Ison and her *barkada*

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- *Paris & Tours: (6 slots available)*
- *Spain:* Salamanca & Barcelona - *(3 slots available)*
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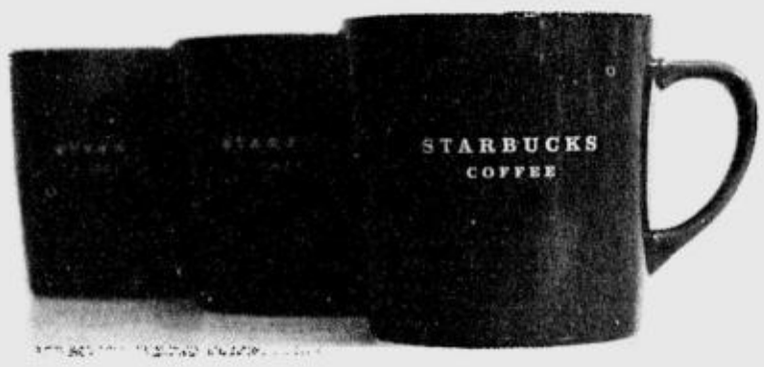
STARBUCKS collectibles include cuddly bears in costumes, signature mugs, drinkware items and backpacks. PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

STARRY goodies!

CHRISTMAS ISN'T OVER FOR STARBUCKS yet—not when you can still claim those mighty planners. And to try and stretch the holiday spirit for as long as we could, 2bU! and Starbucks are giving away awesome goodies to you for being Holiday Angels.

Show us how you've been a Holiday Angel by sending us photos of the great things you did during the holidays.

E-mail your photos in JPG format to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact info.



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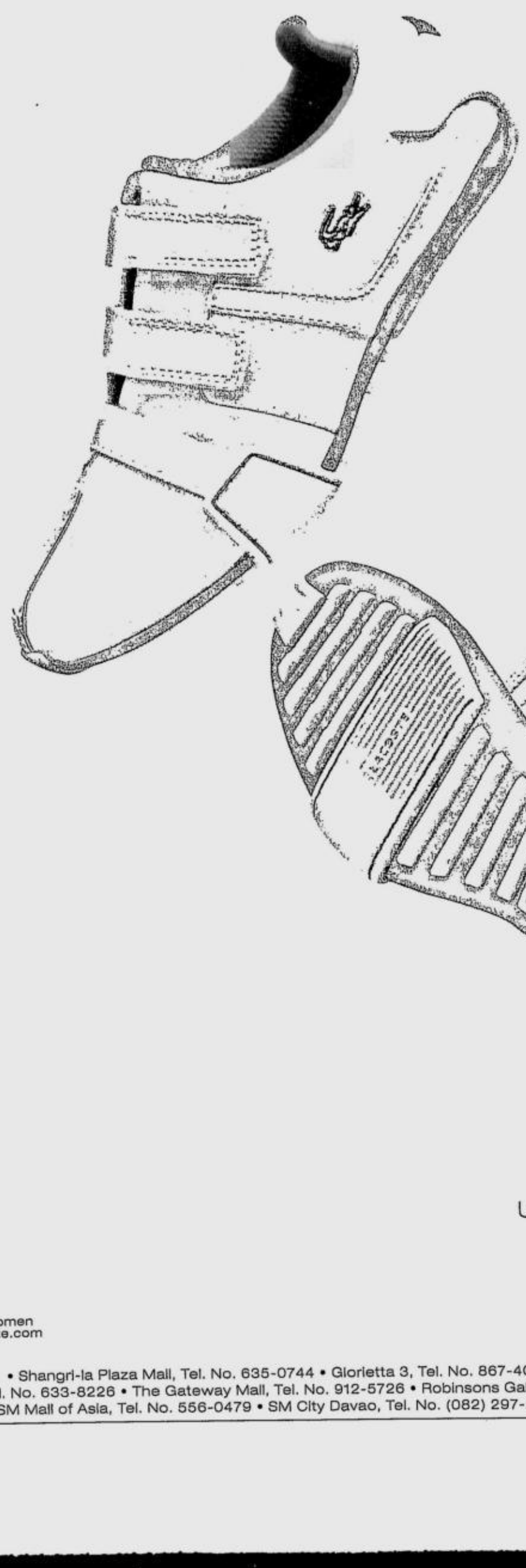

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Love is in the air!

ANIMAX, THE channel that brings you the ultimate animation experience in Asia, is staging the first-ever "Love Is in the Air," the country's biggest speed dating event for the hopelessly romantic, Feb. 10, 2 p.m. onward, at the SM Mall of Asia.

Together with 2BU! and partners UNO Magazine and A-List, get the chance to win a date with your favorite celebrities or, better yet, find that long-lost love. The event is open to all Animax fans ages 18 and above. Registration is ongoing. Visit www.animax-asia.com for more details.

As the first animé-dedicated 24-hour cable and satellite TV channel in the region, Animax not only strives to provide Asian viewers with the latest, most dynamic and innovative programs from top animation studios and producers in Japan. The channel also aims to connect viewers with their various areas of interest and create opportunities that will inspire the youth to fulfill their passions and live their dreams.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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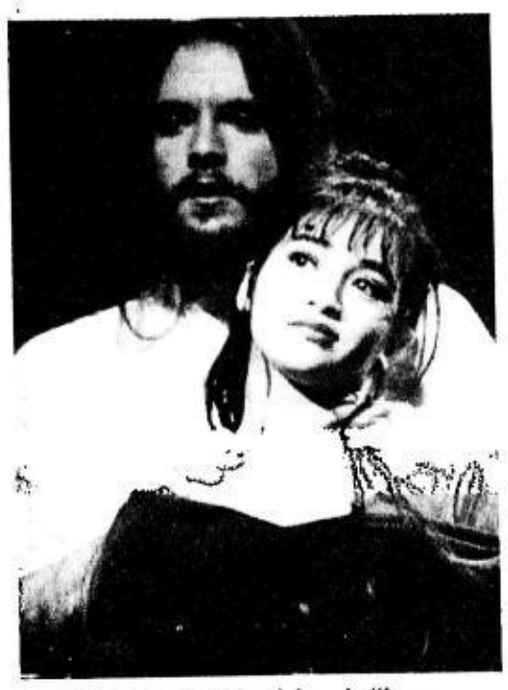


JOANNA Ampil as Magdalene in "Jesus Christ, Superstar" (London), 1996, above, with co-star Steve Balsamo; and as Fantine in "Les Miz" (London), 2003, right.

Another Pinay plays Fantine

Joanna Ampil reprises 'Les Miz' role in London

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

APART FROM LEA SAlonga on Broadway, another Filipino singer-actress is playing the coveted role of Fantine in "Les Misérables"—this time, in the West End production in London.

Salonga herself earlier informed INQUIRER Entertainment of the two other Filipino Fantines—Joan Almedilla on the US national tour and Ampil in the UK.

Ampil first played the part from July 2003 to June 2004.

Although she was a veteran of other Cameron Mackintosh productions, she still had to audition for Fantine at the Drury Lane, where she had portrayed Kim in two stagings of "Miss Saigon," in 1993 and 1998.

In 1996, she was "handpicked" by Andrew Lloyd Webber to play Mary Magdalene in his production of "Jesus Christ Superstar." Ampil as Magdalene was a first for Filipino artists.

All set

During the recent holidays, she juggled the roles of Heidi in "I Sing!" in the UK and Mimi in "Rent" in Germany.

Now, she is all set to reprise the role of Fantine in "Les Miz" at the Queen's Theater from Jan. 29 to June 23, according to her official website.

In a 2003 interview, Ampil thanked "Les Miz" producer Mackintosh for "the opportunity to be the first Asian, non-traditional Fantine."

She described Fantine as "a woman full of hope and positive [feelings]."

During rehearsals, the director kept reminding Ampil of the words "calm and dignified"—the essence of Fantine. "She has so much love to offer. I just love getting to know her story," she related.

Critics showered Ampil with praise in her "Les Miz" comeback three years ago (she played Eponine in 2000).

What's On raved that she was "awesome;" The Evening

ANOTHER/ D5

Proven!

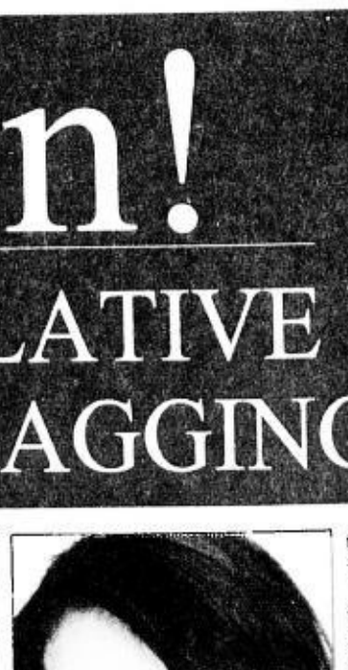
THE ULTIMATE NON-ABLATIVE METHOD TO TIGHTEN LOOSE, SAGGING SKIN

Drooping, sagging skin. Crow's feet. Wrinkles. Laugh lines. Do these look familiar? While few may get away with hiding their age, the condition of one's skin cannot lie. Droops, lines and sags all shout "old age." This is because as we get older, skin cells replace themselves more slowly. The skin's elastin and collagen fibers, which make the skin stretch and retract, begin to loosen. The skin no longer retains moisture as it used to. This makes it less elastic, causing it to sag and fold. Crow's feet and crease lines also form on the brow and eye areas. Even the skin of the neck starts to sag as well.

Carmi Martin

Finally a revolutionary treatment to tighten skin has been invented, without the need for surgery or injections! This skin tightening breakthrough is called **ReFirme**, and it does just that. It "re-firms" your skin. It uses the combination of light and Bi-Polar Radio Frequency to repair lax, sagging skin. It also removes lines and can treat jowl and neck laxity, sags under the eyes and brow lines, and smile lines.

Actress and interior design consultant **Carmi Martin**, who has been one of the first few to try ReFirme, has nothing but praises for it. "I've noticed that as I got older, I got sags in my eye area and some laugh lines. Even if my skin was okay, the droops made my face look tired. When I tried ReFirme, I was relieved it wasn't painful at all! I think I even fell asleep. The results were most noticeable on the 3rd day. As in I was really surprised! My laugh lines were lessened. Even the sags in my eye area – gone. And this was only after one treatment ha! I definitely recommend this to busy women who want an instant lift without the surgery."



Patty Betita

ReFirme is a safe, non-invasive treatment that is virtually painless. The whole procedure takes only about 45 minutes, and no recovery time is necessary. One can even go back to work and other normal activities right after the treatment. In fact, one can easily fit a ReFirme session during a lunchbreak. Another great thing about it is that many clients see an improvement even after just one ReFirme treatment!

Image consultant **Patty Betita** is ecstatic about ReFirme's results as well. "Wow, I was so impressed with ReFirme! I didn't feel any pain during the treatment. Plus I not only saw, but *felt* results immediately after! As in right after the treatment! My skin became firm and the laugh lines disappeared. When my friends saw me after the treatment, they asked me if I had Botox done or something. I told them about ReFirme and how much I loved it! I plan to make this part of my beauty regimen. Amazing! I'm totally satisfied."

You, too can get firmer, smoother and younger-looking skin! Like Carmi and Patty, you, too can be proof that this amazing treatment works!

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1 ERAGON
2 MANO PO 5
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ROB-B-HOOD
7 ERAGON
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ERAGON
7 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
8 MANO PO 5
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 LIGALIG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 ROB-B-HOOD
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 MANO PO 5

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
8 LIGALIG
9 MANO PO 5
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 ERAGON
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
9 MANO PO 5

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ERAGON
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ERAGON
7 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 MANO PO 5
11 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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3 ERAGON
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 MANO PO 5
8 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY MARILAO (044)0332013-17
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)0637681-85
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ERAGON
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ERAGON
3 THE NATIVITY
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341205-06
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON

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SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 FEAST
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 THE RETURN
2 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 ERAGON
6 RESERVED
7 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 ERAGON
2 THE RETURN
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BOA
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 ERAGON
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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 ERAGON • THX
2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 ERAGON
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
5 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
7 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
9 MANO PO 5
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
10 LIGALIG
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ERAGON
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:35 9:00
2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:35 3:40 6:45 9.50
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10.00
6 ROB-B-HOOD
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
7 ERAGON
12:30 3:00 5.20 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
4 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:35 6:20 9:05
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:00 6:40 9:00
6 ERAGON
11:00 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00
7 ERAGON
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
8 BLOOD DIAMOND
11:20 2:30 5:40 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

PIONEER 887-5378

1 ERAGON
1.05 3.30 5.55 8:20
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:05 2:55 5:45 8:35
3 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20
4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

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2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 LIGALIG
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

LIPA (043) 757-3684 (043) 312-5870

1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KAMASUTRA 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 LIGALIG
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 MANO PO 5

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 KAMASUTRA 3
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 ERAGON

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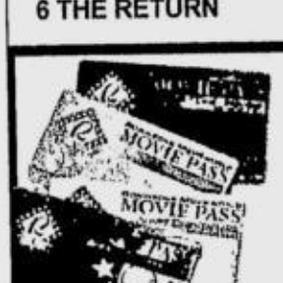
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ERAGON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3/SHAKE RATTLE
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6 THE RETURN

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 THE RETURN
5 KAMASUTRA 3
6 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS



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FEEDBACK

FROM SEVERINO Enopena (srenopena@yahoo.com), 2071 Roxas Boulevard, Malate:

Children who'll get the kind of ideas, notions and values fed them by such as movies as like "Enteng Kabisote" will become leaders 15 years from now. As a Roman poet pointed out, what we are today as a people started somewhere in the past. It would be easier if this were just another garbage-in-garbage-out situation. But [this kind of] garbage has been our daily subsistence for quite a while now.

New TV public affairs . . .

From page D5

(Nutam) provides a helpful profile of Filipino televiewers, particularly those living in urban areas.

It monitored viewing in about 1,600 homes, representing some 7.2 million urban households with TV sets, and learned that Luzon families watch TV for 7.5 hours per day, Mindanao homes watch for 7.3 hours daily and Visayas households view TV for around 6.7 hours per day.

The study, which was conducted last October, also shows that females watch TV longer than males. Those aged 40 and above and kids aged 2-12 view the most (3.7 hours), while those in their 20s watch the least (3 hours).

According to AGB Nielsen's recent Establishment Survey, TV penetration is almost 90 percent across urban Philippines. Luzon holds the largest share of class ABC households, which are mostly concentrated in Metro Manila. Luzon also registers the highest TV ownership at 92 percent, and cable ownership at 23 percent.

Urban Visayas has the largest number of class E homes at 29 percent, and the most number of big families, having almost 60 percent of homes with five or more family members. The region has the lowest TV ownership at 78 percent, while cable penetration is at 12 percent.

For its part, Mindanao has the largest share of class D homes at 60 percent, and the most homes with kids at 64 percent. TV penetration in urban Mindanao is at 85 percent, but the region has the lowest cable penetration at only 8 percent. For details, log on to www.agbnielsen.net.

New films

From Mel Gibson comes "Apocalypto," a mythic action-adventure set against the turbulent end times of the once great Mayan civilization.

"The Fountain," finds Hugh Jackman playing a modern-day scientist trying to find a cure for the cancer that's killing his wife (Rachel Weisz), a conquistador on a quest to find the fabled fountain of youth and an astronaut traveling toward a distant future.

"Rocky Balboa" returns, with Sylvester Stallone reprising his signature screen character in conflicted maturity.

Croc hunter's daughter

From page D6

"Ocean's Deadliest" documentary her exuberant, khaki-clad naturalist father was working on when he died in September.

While with her US-born mother Terri Irwin, Bindi and her Crocmen backing dancers will team up with The Wiggles for concerts in Los Angeles and New York.

Bindi has been performing her show already to thousands at the Irwin family's Australia Zoo Crocoseum in Queensland.

As part of an Australian government promotion, Bindi will join Australian actors Russell Crowe and Naomi Watts, as well as Australian-born media baron Rupert Murdoch, for a gala dinner.

Reuters

Thompson slams Burberry

LONDON—Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson has blasted British luxury goods retailer Burberry for the company's decision to close a factory in south Wales and switch production to China.

The actress is the latest in a series of celebrities and politicians to slam the world-famous up-market firm for the planned move.

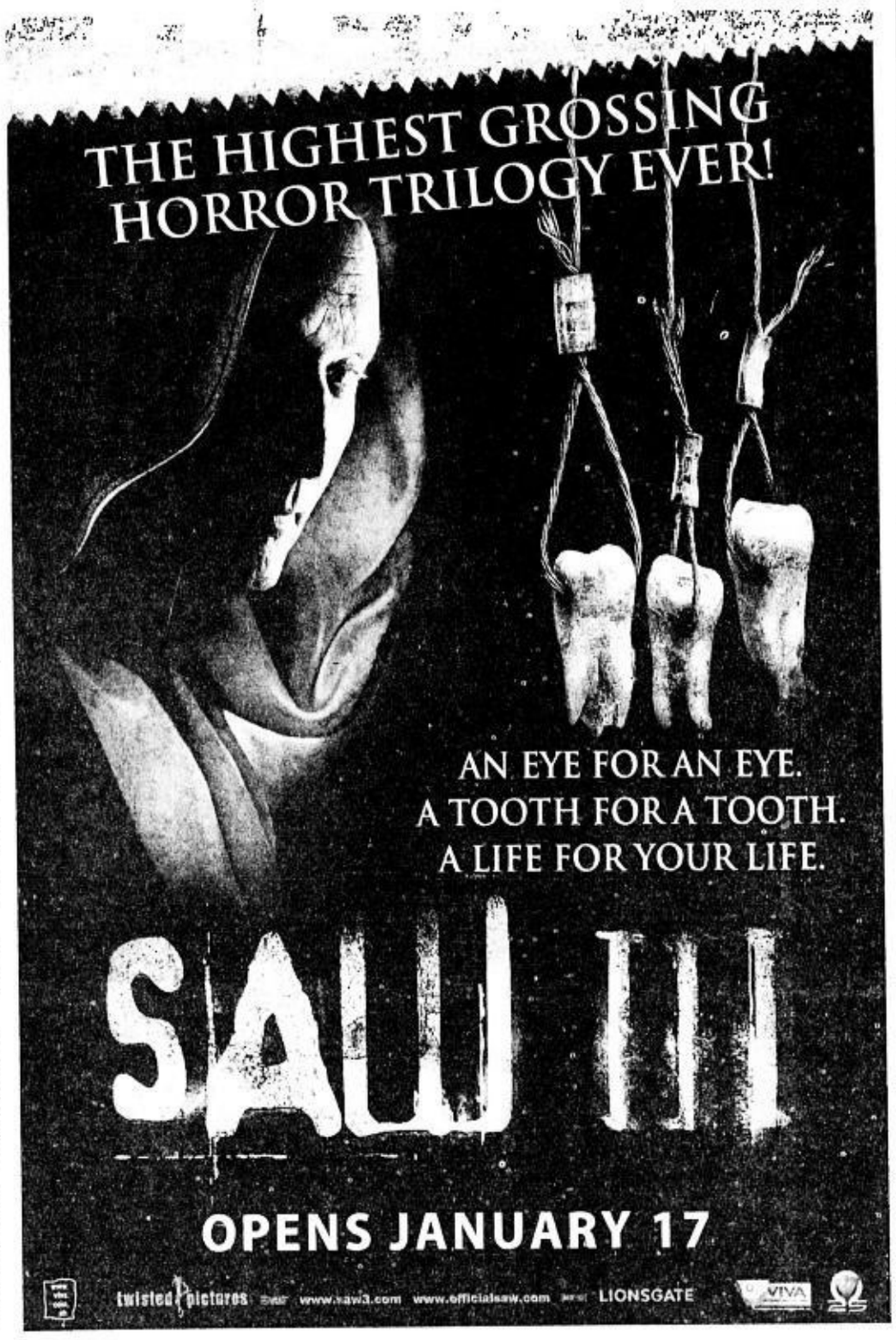
Some 300 workers at the plant in Treorchy have been told it will close in March.

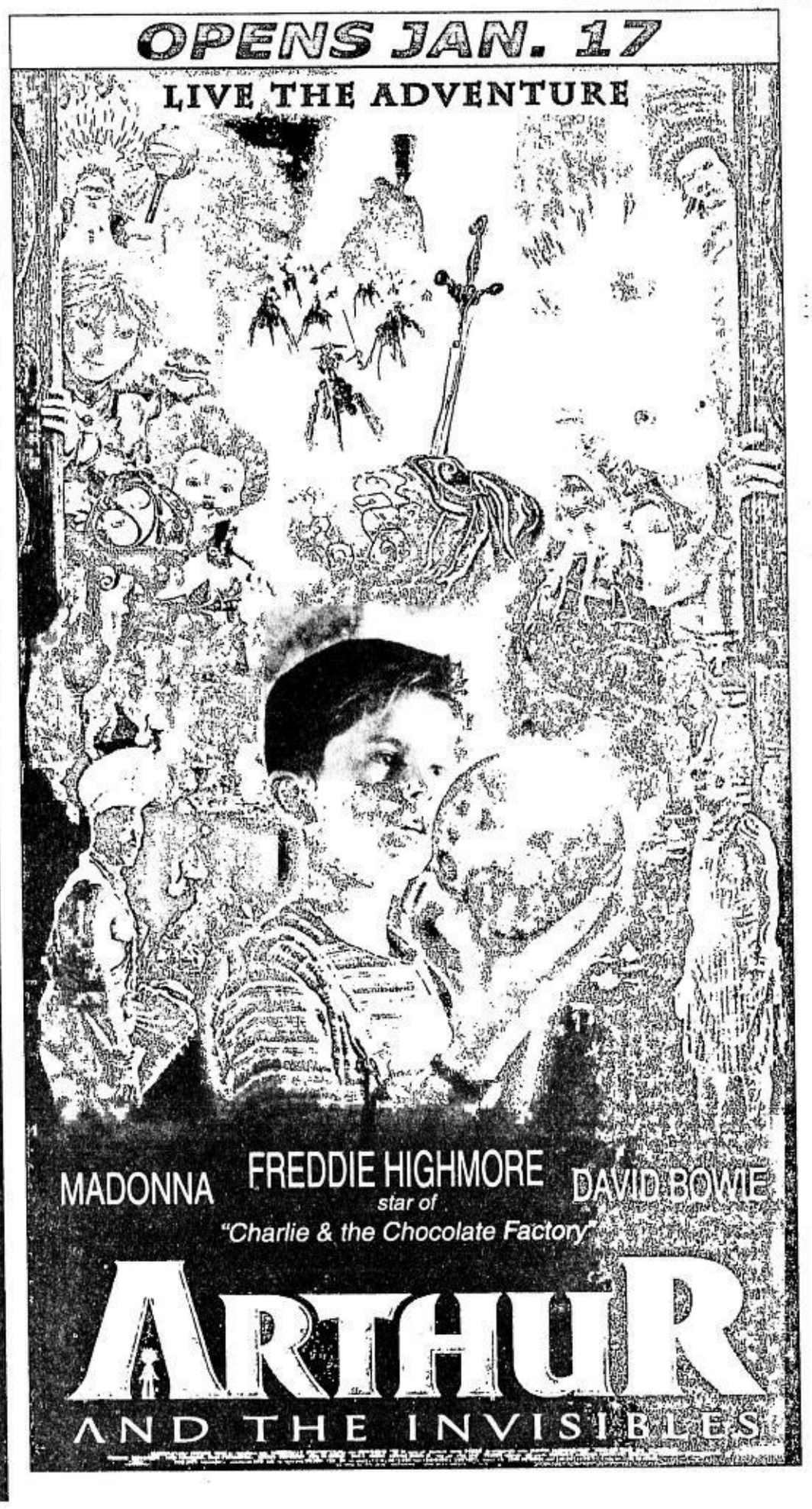
Thompson said Sunday, "When I buy clothes, I always check to see where they are made. When an item that is so clearly branded as British to the core is 'Made in China' ... I often put that article straight back, suspecting corporate greed and unacceptably low wage packets for the producers of that article.

"Burberry should not make this move. By staying in Wales ... it will retain its code of decency and high standards. Anything else is a betrayal of the workforce and a bastardization of the brand."

AFP

EMMA THOMPSON





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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	3 ERAGON	4 ROB-B-HOOD
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 ROB-B-HOOD	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 ERAGON	5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	6 ERAGON	7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND		2 ERAGON	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX BLOOD DIAMOND - GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	4 ROB-B-HOOD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 BLOOD DIAMOND	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ERAGON	2 BLOOD DIAMOND	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 FEAST
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 ERAGON		2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 BLOOD DIAMOND	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	

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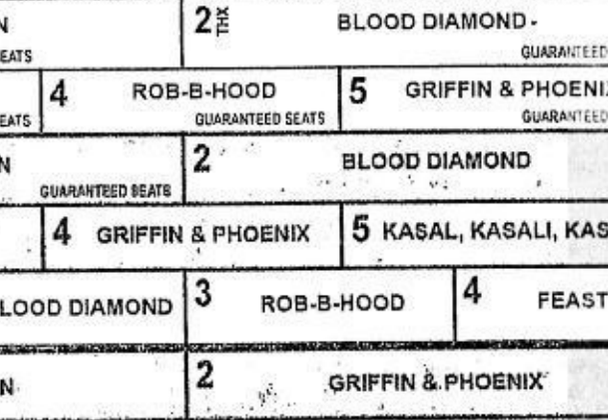

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BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

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BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

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BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE
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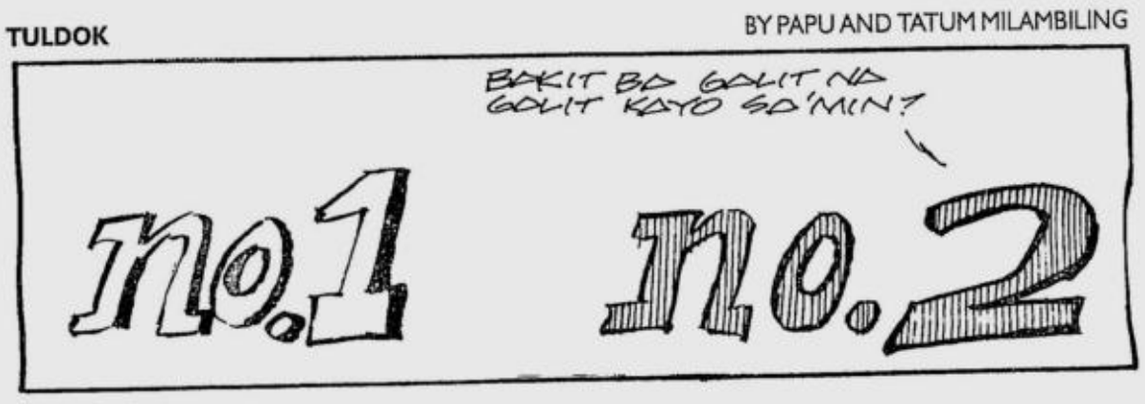
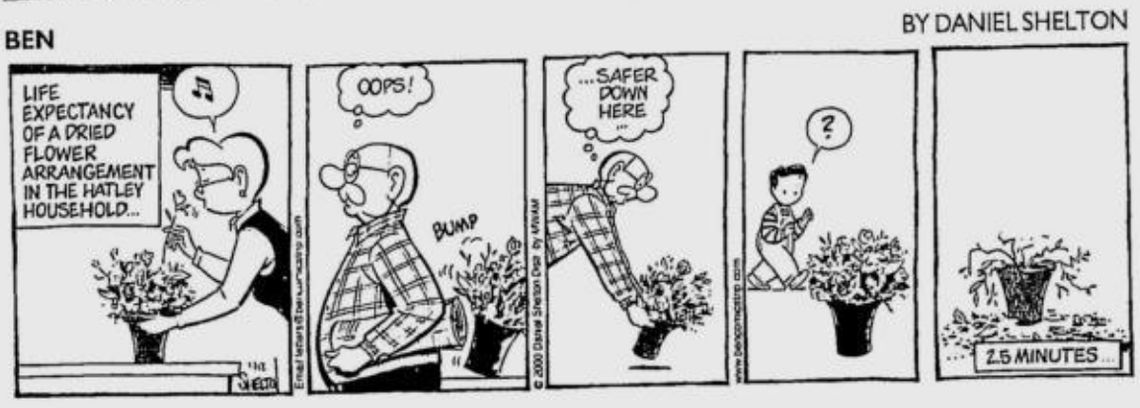
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

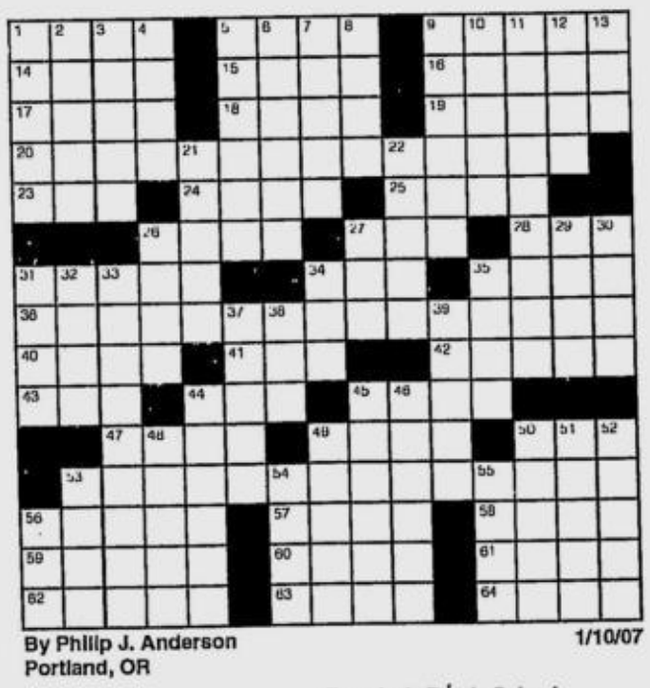
TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON



DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
1/10/07

ACROSS
1 Smelting residue
5 Homer-hitter Sammy
9 Oater group
14 Hawaiian port
15 Fed.
16 Deathly pale
17 God of the sun
18 Occupancy payment
19 Pampas lasso
20 Tycoons
23 Guitarist Paul
24 Stable staple
25 "__ and Mindy"
26 Witty Bombeck
27 Scull crewman
28 R-V contents
31 On-line transaction
34 Curator's forte
35 Roof-top tote
36 Tycoons
40 Stand
41 Dad
42 Vacation vessel
43 Of the ear
44 Pack animal
45 Track gathering
47 "Censor" of Rome
49 Medicinal fluids
50 __-disant (so-called)
53 Tycoons
56 U.S. painter Rembrandt
57 Most born in August
58 Balustrade
59 Burns's "sweet" river
60 Meara or Bancroft
61 On the quiet side
62 Medley meals
63 Pesters
64 Not as much

DOWN
1 Shoulder wrap
2 Limber and long
3 Certain succulents
4 No longer here
5 Small river
6 Code of silence
7 "__ of Iwo Jima"
8 Feed the kitty
9 Beauty spot?
10 Basketry willow
11 Shiny suit material
12 Gels
13 Alfonso's queen
21 Actress Sophia
22 Noted violin maker
26 Nobelist Wiesel
27 Sphere
29 Buster Brown's dog
30 Bygone atlas initials
31 River of Spain
32 Club in a casino
33 Business partner
34 Small viper
35 "M*A*S*H" co-star Loretta
37 England's __ Downs
38 Plea at sea
39 Flash of reflected light
44 University of Georgia city
45 River of Vietnam
46 Obliterates
48 Shining brightly
49 Extended aria
50 Climb
51 Dust Bowl migrants
52 __ of Scilly
53 Bulk
54 __-Ude, Russia
55 Caspian feeder
56 Dads

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	S	■	A	C	O	R	N	■	T	H	I	C	K
O	F	T	■	R	O	M	E	O	■	H	A	N	O	I
R	I	O	■	C	H	A	I	R	P	E	R	S	O	N
P	R	O	■	H	O	R	N	■	A	R	E	■	■	■
H	E	L	P	E	R	S	■	T	R	E	M	B	L	E
■	■	P	E	R	T	■	C	R	A	B	■	E	A	T
T	H	I	N	S	■	G	A	U	D	Y	■	N	T	H
H	O	G	S	■	T	R	I	C	E	■	A	C	H	E
R	O	E	■	Q	U	I	R	K	■	O	T	H	E	R
O	H	O	■	U	N	T	O	■	G	R	O	W	■	■
B	A	N	D	I	E	S	■	A	R	A	P	A	H	O
■	■	■	E	C	U	■	S	P	A	T	■	R	A	W
C	O	U	C	H	P	O	T	A	T	O	■	M	I	L
O	U	T	R	E	■	D	A	R	E	R	■	E	K	E
P	R	E	Y	S	■	E	N	T	R	Y	■	R	U	T

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1/10/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're tough and gutsy. You take life head-on. You're realistic, honest and sometimes blunt. You apply the same standards to yourself that you do to others. You have strong opinions, and you stick by them. Others find you to be colorful and fascinating. They admire you. In the year ahead, you will focus on partnerships and your closest friendships.
Birthdate of: Rod Stewart, singer; George Foreman, boxer; Pat Benatar, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today's Moon is opposite your sign. This makes you emotionally tuned in to others. Conversations are optimistic and upbeat. You feel sensitive to the needs of a friend.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might be able to help a coworker today. The resources of others are available to you now. If you need to borrow something, now is the time to ask.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your creative imagination is heightened today. Explore the arts or playful activities with children. Romance is dreamy and promising. Enjoy your day!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Conversations with family members are sympathetic and supportive. You're in a position to help someone who needs your help, or possibly vice versa. Do what you can.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Because your imagination is in overdrive, daydreaming is likely today. Don't worry about this. Einstein said that his imagination was the key to much of what he did.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be careful while shopping today. Your eyes are bigger than your stomach and all that. You might buy something you can't afford. Just don't get yourself in trouble.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because you're sensitive to other people's moods today, you're also sympathetic. You easily can put yourself in their situation. You want to help.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Time spent alone will help you today to sort something out. But you also need solitude to just daydream and be by yourself and think about what might be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day to enjoy time with friends. You're genuinely interested in what's happening in their lives. You'll be a good listener and a sympathetic supporter.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might inadvertently call attention to yourself today—be aware of this. Bosses are sympathetic to your needs, or maybe you can appreciate what their world is all about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel you need to get away today. You want to escape. Enjoy good times with friends, and exchange fantasies and dreams.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): If you can use your resources to help someone today, you will. You feel sympathetic to the needs of others, especially those who are less fortunate than you. (It's good to practice kindness.)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

	7	6				3	4	
4			3		5			8
5			6					7
9			7					4
	3	8				7	5	
6			1					9
8			5					1
7			9		6			3
	9	4				5	8	

Difficulty Level ★★★
1/10

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	5	7	1	9	2	4	6	8
9	8	6	7	5	4	2	1	3
2	1	4	8	3	6	9	5	7
1	3	5	4	2	7	6	8	9
4	6	9	3	8	5	7	2	1
8	7	2	6	1	9	5	3	4
6	4	8	5	7	1	3	9	2
5	9	1	2	4	3	8	7	6
7	2	3	9	6	8	1	4	5

Difficulty Level ★★
1/09

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New TV public affairs and news talents needed

IF WE HAD OUR DRUTHERS, OUR TV NETworks' wish list for 2007 should include a renewed search for new TV news and public affairs on-camera personnel.

Truth to tell, quite a number of their current talents are long in the tooth. Worse, some of them are taking their work for granted and appear to just be coasting along, more concerned about how they look than what they're thinking and saying.

Worst of all, some news and public affairs talents have had their objectivity compromised by playing footsies with politicians and other power brokers, so viewers in the know no longer give the shows they host much credence.

It further appears that our networks' news departments have a shallow bench, with a few major talents working on too many programs. This lowers the standards of their work, and viewers are the poorer for it.

It also rankles that so-called news talents are really not as rigorously focused as they should be, since they also host magazine and even lifestyle shows.

This dilutes their effectivity and believability as broadcast journalists, but their bosses don't seem to think that this is a problem at all.

In any case, there are too few news talents on view, so our networks should discover and develop a new batch of qualified and principled on-camera personnel, to be of better service to viewers. That's the bottom line, isn't it?

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Feedback

From Paul R. Mortel of Marikina City: "For sometime now, I have been watching Japanese documentary films on local TV. Since these programs have been shown repeatedly for a long time, I guess their telecasts are 'gratis et amore.' The question is: "Do our own documentary films, say on tourism, get the same treatment on a government TV station in Japan?"

Televiewers profiled

AGB Nielsen Media Research Philippines' National Urban Television Audience Measurement

NEW TV/ D2

First major US awards this year

PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA—SOME of last year's big commercial disappointments were among the top success stories at the Palm Springs International Film Festival 2007 Gala Awards.

The dramas "Babel" and "Little Children," both widely considered poor box-office performers, took multiple honors.

The list of winners: Ensemble Performance Award: "Babel"; Director of the Year: Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu ("Babel"); Career Achievement Award: Cate Blanchett; Desert Palm Achievement for Action: Kate Winslet ("Little Children"); Sony Bono Visionary Award: Todd Field ("Little Children"); Rising Star Award, Male: Adam Beach ("Flags of Our Fathers") and Female: Jessica Biel ("The Illusionist"); Breakthrough Performance Award: Jennifer Hudson ("Dreamgirls"). *AP*

Another Pinay plays Fantine

From page D1

Standard called her "enchanting."

Aside from "Les Miz," "I Sing" and "Rent," Ampil also worked on a special edition CD single entitled "Reach for the Stars."

According to her website, all proceeds from the CD will benefit the Sun and Moon Home for Children in Manila, which was set up by "Les Miz" and "Saigon" composer Claude-Michel Schönberg and his Filipino friends.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City · Tel. No: 8981440-41 · DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:35,3:05,5:35, 8:05,10:30	GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:40,4:40,7:40,10:35
ERAGON G 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:00,9:20	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO PG13 1:20,3.30,5:40, 7:50,10:00	ERAGON G 1:00,3:20,5:40, 8:00,10:20

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THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
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CINEMA 1 ERAGON GP 11:40, 2:05, 4:30, 6:55, 9:20
CINEMA 2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX PG-13 12:00, 2:25, 5:10, 7:45, 10:20
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a diversion for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 ROB-B-HOOD PG-13 11:40, 2:25, 5:10, 7:55, 10:35
CINEMA 4 BLOOD DIAMOND R-13 10:30, 1:25, 4:20, 7:15, 10:10
CINEMA 5 ERAGON GP 12:55, 3:20, [illegible]
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA HOTLINES CALL 722-4496
MUSIC MUSEUM THEATRE PROMENADE GREENHILLS

Jan. 23, 2007	Marissa Sanchez	8:30 PM
Feb. 2 & 3, 2007	Piolo Pascual & Sam Milby	8:30 PM
Feb. 13 & 14, 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM
Feb. 16 & 17, 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
EVERY MONDAY Jan. 13, 2007 Jan. 16, 23, 30, 2007	DANCE NIGHT Rachel Gerodias Dyords Ko Po FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC 116	7:00 PM 8:30 PM 8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION PLS CALL 721-6726 OR 721-6635

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Gateway CINEPLEX 10 DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

ERAGON 12:20 / 1:10 / 2:40 / 3:30 / 5:00 5:50 / 7:20 / 8:10 / 9:50	ROB-B-HOOD 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 1:05 / 4:00 / 6:55 / 9:50	CINEMA 1
	HAPPY FEET 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 1:40 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:40	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	ERAGON 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

Gateway MALL 5

ERAGON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30	ROB-B-HOOD 12:40 / 3:30 / 5:20 / 8:10	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 12:35 / 2:30 / 5:25 / 8:20
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:00 / 3:35 / 6:10 / 8:45	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

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THE LETTERMEN...MORE ! January 12, Friday 8:00 pm
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MAGIC 89.9

EASTWOOD CINEMAS DOLBY DIGITAL

1	ROB-B-HOOD 2:25, 5:10, 7:55, 10:40 PG-13
2	BLOOD DIAMOND 1:55, 5:05, 8:15, 11:10 R-13
3	ERAGON 1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00 G
4	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13

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AS DARKNESS FALLS, THE LAST DRAGON WILL CHOOSE ITS RIDER
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"RUSH HOUR" MEETS "THE PACIFIER"
JACKIE CHAN ROB-B-HOOD
He walked into a robbery and ran off with a 30-million dollar baby.
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JCI VIVA

EXPERIENCE THE PHENOMENON
OPENS JANUARY 17
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DENZEL WASHINGTON
DEJA VU
FROM THE PRODUCER OF "PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN" AND THE DIRECTOR OF "ENEMY OF THE STATE"
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

WHERE THE BOYS ARE. (From L) Matt Damon, Mark Wahlberg and Leonardo DiCaprio were at the New York Film Critics Awards last weekend. AFP

Croc hunter's daughter

CANBERRA—THE 8-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER of late Australian "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin kicks off her American show biz career this week with a series of high-profile television appearances and speeches across the United States.

Bindi Irwin, who will star in the 26-part "Bindi, the Jungle Girl" series on Discovery Kids network this year, will address the National Press Club in Washington, as well as appear on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" and "The Late Show" with David Letterman.

"She'll be welcomed with open arms and rightly so. She's a very special child," Discovery senior vice president Annie Howell told Australian media on Monday.

Bindi's US tour coincides with the airing of the

CROC/ D3

RUSHES

BINDI Irwin and her mom Terri

NOW SHOWING

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YRS. OLD AND ABOVE

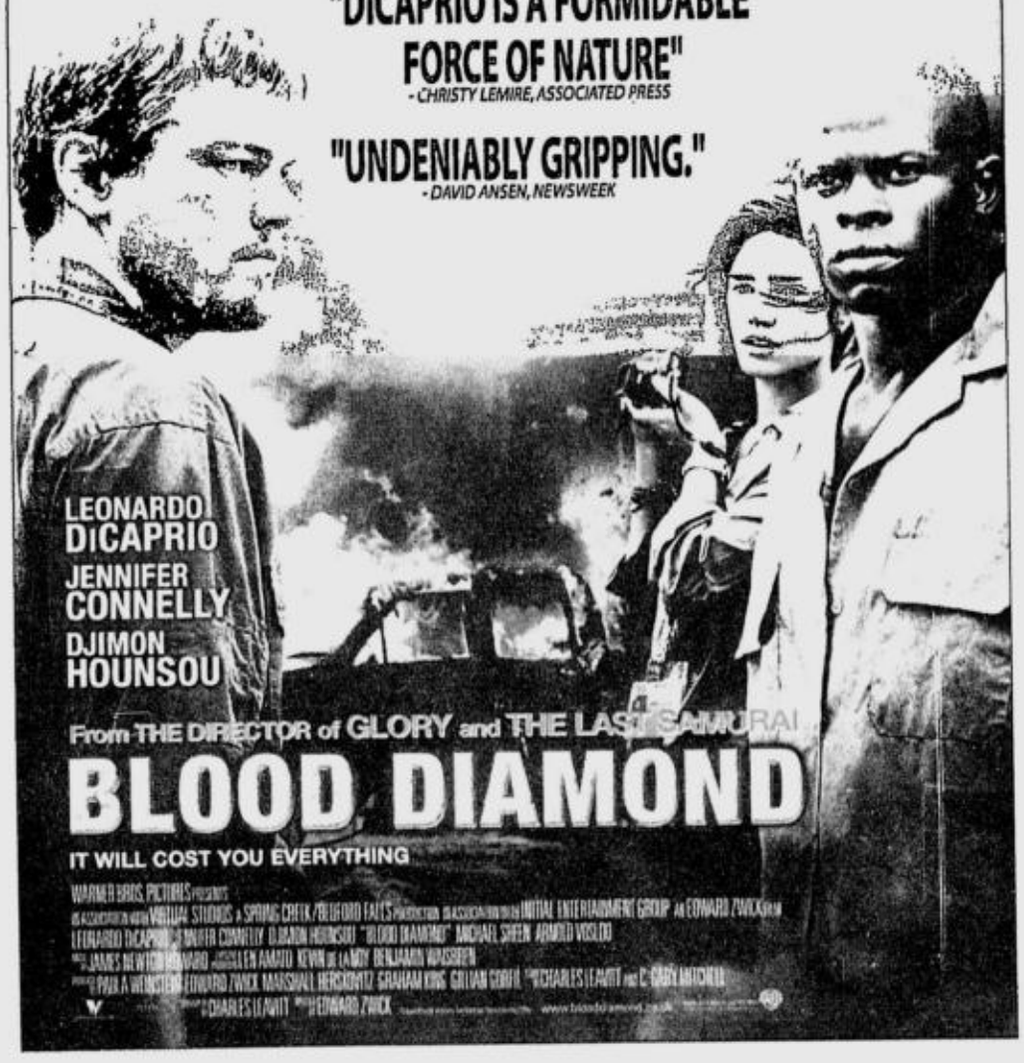
"ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES OF 2006."

"OVERWHELMING. HEROIC. 'BLOOD DIAMOND' IS A GEM."
- GENE SHALIT, TODAY SHOW

"A POWERFUL PERFORMANCE BY DJIMON HOUNSOU."
- CLAUDIA PUIG, USA TODAY

"DiCAPRIO IS A FORMIDABLE FORCE OF NATURE"
- CHRISTY LEMIRE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

"UNDENIABLY GRIPPING."
- DAVID ANSEN, NEWSWEEK



MTRCB PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

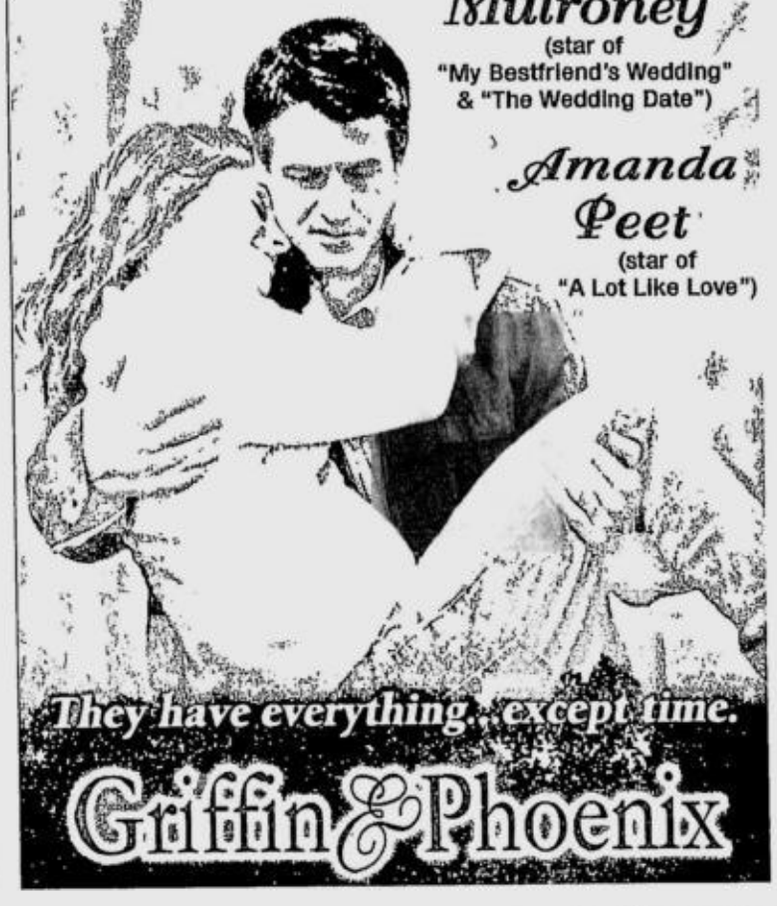
NOW SHOWING

IN THE TRADITION OF "IF ONLY" & "A WALK TO REMEMBER" COMES ANOTHER MOVIE THAT TOUCHES THE HEART AND MAKES YOU BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LOVE

LOVE NEVER DIES
IT IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

Dermont Mulroney
(star of "My Bestfriend's Wedding" & "The Wedding Date")

Amanda Peet
(star of "A Lot Like Love")

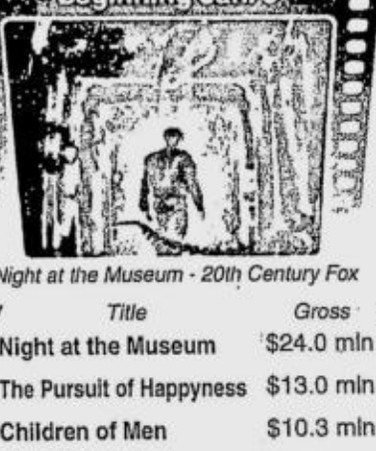


They have everything... except time.

Griffin & Phoenix

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box-office for the three-day weekend beginning Jan. 5



Night at the Museum - 20th Century Fox

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	1	Night at the Museum	$24.0 mln	3
2	2	The Pursuit of Happyness	$13.0 mln	4
3	22	Children of Men	$10.3 mln	2
4	☆	Freedom Writers	$9.7 mln	1
5	3	Dreamgirls	$8.8 mln	4
6	☆	Happily N'Ever After	$6.8 mln	1
7	4	Charlotte's Web	$6.6 mln	4
8	5	The Good Shepherd	$6.5 mln	3
9	6	Rocky Balboa	$6.3 mln	3
10	8	We Are Marshall	$5.1 mln	3

This Week, Last Week — *Weeks in Release*

☆ *New release*

Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday

REUTERS

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Get a chance to WIN a Honda Jazz plus other great prizes!

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Promo Mechanics:

1. Consumer buys specially marked packs of M&M's® Chocolate: Milk, Peanut, Crispy or Minis with an M&M's® Jazz Up Your Christmas 2 sticker from any participating establishments. Each sticker will have a unique alphanumeric raffle code printed on it.
2. To join the promo, just text MMJAZZ RAFFLE CODE NAME/COMPLETE ADDRESS/AGE to 29767 for Globe, Touch Mobile, Sun Cellular, Smart, Addict Mobile and Talk & Text Subscribers. P2.50 will be charged per text message sent to Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Addict Mobile and Talk & Text subscribers, P2.00 will be charged for Sun Cellular subscribers.
   Example: MMJAZZ A1234/John Reyes/234 Ruby St. Makati City/30
   For succeeding entries, just type MMJAZZ Raffle Code
   Example: MMJAZZ B5678
3. M&M's® packs with the Jazz Up Your Christmas 2 stickers must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize.
4. Promo will run from November 1 – December 31, 2006.
5. Prizes include: 3 units Honda Jazz Cars (1.3 Automatic Transmission), 10 units Sony Ericsson K800i Mobile Phones and 50 units Apple Nano I-Pods (4 gb).
6. Draws will be held on: November 22, December 6, December 13 and December 20. Grand draw will be on January 10, 2007.
7. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent, the more chances of winning.
8. Cut-off dates for entries is every Sunday, 11:59pm prior to the draw date. For the Grand Draw, cut-off will be on December 31, 2006, 11:59pm.
9. Draws will be held at the Information Gateway office in the presence of a representative from BFAD, Information Gateway and Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
10. Winners will receive a call with accompanying instructions on how to claim their prize. They must be prepared to surrender the M&M's® chocolate wrapper with the winning raffle code. Damaged, altered and/or tampered stickers, as well as wrappers with no promo stickers and vice versa will be disqualified and rendered invalid.
11. Verification procedures will be enforced to ensure validity and authenticity of the promo sticker and wrapper. Representatives from BFAD and Master Foods Philippines Inc. will conduct the verification procedures.
12. Verified winners will then be eligible to claim their prize.
13. Winners will be announced in 3 major newspapers after the grand draw.
14. Prizes are non-transferable and not convertible to cash.
15. All prizes are tax paid.
16. Children under 13 years old are not eligible to join the promo.
17. Employees of Master Foods Philippines Inc, all their agencies, suppliers, partners and sponsors, including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.

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Per DOH-BFAD Permit# 1281, Series of 2006

METRO / A17

Jinggoy's wife, JV's mom reportedly set to run for San Juan mayor

NEWS/ A7

Defensor platform for Senate: Erap's temporary release

NEWS / A2

Gov't troops kill Abu Sayyaf bomb expert with P1-M reward on his head

WORLD / A19

US Democratic senators oppose Bush's plan to increase troops in Iraq by 20,000

German cops nail 322 men linked to RP porn site

BERLIN—GERMAN POLICE USED THE HELP OF the nation's 14 credit card companies to track down 322 men suspected of subscribing to an illegal child pornography website based abroad, authorities said on Tuesday.

Authorities said they could not track down the exact supplier of the child pornography overseas but said they were able to trace the country of origin—the Philippines.

GERMAN COPS/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, January 11, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 34 P18 website: inquirer.net

Slim waist is standard of beauty, say scientists

PARIS—WAIST-WATCHers, listen up.

Feminine beauty has been celebrated across the ages. But an enduring belief is this: What constitutes attractiveness in a woman cannot be pinned down. It depends on the

SLIM WAIST/ A6

MJ clears GMA in extortion

Claims Ms Arroyo did not benefit from $2M he gave Perez

By Cynthia D. Balana and Inquirer Research

THE MAN WHOM EX-President Joseph Estrada called a "corporate genius," Mark Jimenez, yesterday cleared President Macapagal-Arroyo of involvement in the $2-million extortion case that the Office of the Ombudsman is set to file against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Jimenez said he was convinced that the President did not benefit from the money, which, he said, was exacted from him by the accused—Perez, his wife Rosario, brother-in-law Ramon Arceo and business associate Ernest Escaler.

The money was wired by Jimenez to Escaler's account in Coutts Bank in Hong Kong in February 2001 and was later transferred to Arceo and Perez's Swiss accounts.

A panel of prosecutors said there was sufficient evidence to establish that Perez and the three others had committed illegal acts.

Jimenez reacted when told that the highest official of the land was "usually" informed of any transactions involving members of the Cabinet.

"*Pangingikil ng ano?* (Extortion for what?) [The word] 'usually' is not a statement of fact. [It] is a statement of what—zero to 100 percent [involvement]. I think it's zero. You decide," he said at his penthouse in Lawton Tower of Essensa East Forbes Condominium in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

Pressed to be more specific, Jimenez said, "*wala*" (none), referring to the possibility of Ms Arroyo having benefited from the money.

"Perez is not a dummy for anybody. He did it on his own. Everybody has [his or her] own reason," said Jimenez, who was in light blue long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, but was barefoot.

The members of media who interviewed him yesterday were asked by his staff to leave their shoes at the door and to walk into the penthouse in their bare feet to protect the wooden floor.

MARK JIMENEZ/ A4

MAKING HIS MARK: The Man of the Hour, Mark Jimenez, answers questions from the media in his penthouse at the Lawton Tower of Essensa East Forbes Condominium at the Fort, Taguig. ERIK ARAZAS

Palace admits Nani's case a Pandora's box

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ACknowledged that a trial of former Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez on corruption charges could open a Pandora's box but it could not say its impact on the Arroyo administration.

"In the course of the trial, many things will come out . . . and it's better that all of these come out in the open," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

But the day before, Ermita said that Perez, the first justice secretary of President Macapagal-Arroyo, was innocent of the graft and extortion charges to be filed by the Office of the Ombudsman in connection with the $2-million extortion complaint lodged against him by former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Perez might have been a mere "sacrificial lamb" so the administration could project an image that it was serious in running after "big-time grafters."

Reacting to Ermita's statement that Perez was innocent, deposed President Joseph Estrada called

PALACE/ A4

Six killed, 32 hurt in Cotabato bombings

By Aquiles Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—TWO explosions rocked two Cotabato provinces early evening Wednesday, killing at least six people and wounding 32 others, officials said. The attacks came amid warnings that Muslim militants may try to disrupt this weekend's Asian regional summit.

The first blast occurred near a lotto outlet in front of the Central Public Market here at past 6 p.m. yesterday.

More than two hours later, another blast went off near a police outpost in Kidapawan City in North Cotabato, seriously wounding six people.

Bernardo Piñol, North Cotabato provincial administrator, said the explosion occurred at 8:45 p.m. outside a wooden police outpost along Quezon Boulevard. Author-

6 KILLED/ A6

US Navy ship off Mactan stirs talk

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Jolene Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—WHAT IS A US Navy ship doing in the waters off Mactan Channel in Cebu?

This question was raised by various sectors here yesterday since the arrival of the USS John McDonnell on Tuesday that coincided with the resumption of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian summit in Cebu.

The Naval Forces Central Command (Navforcen), which is based in Mactan, confirmed the presence of the US vessel in Mactan channel but denied it had anything to do with the Asean event.

US NAVY/ A8

Iphone unveiled

Apple introduced a new device Tuesday that aims to follow the success of the iPod

Features:	Mobile phone (Quad-band)
	Internet access
	Music player (MP3 player)
	Digital camera (2 megapixel)
Screen size:	8.9 cm (3.5 inches)
Resolution:	320 x 480 x 160 ppi
Input method:	Multi-touch
Operating system:	OS X
Storage:	4 GB, 8 GB
Weight:	135 g

Shipped to US stores in June, to be available in Asia in 2008

AFP 100107 Source: Apple

And now the 'iPhone' reinvents the cell phone

SAN FRANCISCO—APPLE Computer on Tuesday announced its entry into the mobile phone market, proudly unveiling its "iPhone" that the company hopes will emulate the revolutionary success of the iPod.

Apple chief executive Steve Jobs introduced the sleek new device—which also offers Internet access, a music player and a digital camera—at the Macworld Conference and Expo in San Francisco, showcasing Apple technology.

"Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything," Jobs said.

"It's like having the Internet in your pocket," the Apple CEO said. "It's the ultimate

AND NOW/ A6

Asean likely to endorse landmark antiterror pact

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESterday called on her East Asian allies to join ranks in making the region safe as ministers began arriving ahead of their leaders for a summit that is likely to endorse a landmark counterterrorism convention.

Ms Arroyo announced in Malacañang the start in Cebu of the annual Association of Southeast Asian summit which she said was a "golden opportunity to carve out a new future for the region."

"The Philippines hosts the Asean summit at a time that the whole region is taking stock of the present and planning ahead for the future. Great stakes are involved in the continuing integration of the entire East Asia which is driven by strong centripetal forces to close ranks for a safer and more secure community, more open and equitable trade, cooperation in all fronts of energy development, and the prosperity of its diverse peoples," she said.

Terrorism is a key concern at the summit. Philippine security officials still insist there were no specific threats from al-Qaida-linked militants in the country, although Australia said Monday it had received information suggesting terrorists were "in the final stages of planning attacks" on a range of targets in the Philippines.

Chief Supt. Romeo Ricardo, director of the Philippine National Police Intelli-

ASEAN/ A8

REM ZAMORA

THE LATEST IN BATTLE GEAR worn by a civil disturbance management unit is snappy and smart and mean-looking at the Cebu International Convention Center. The contingent will stay until the meetings of Asean and Asian heads of state end on Sunday.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over the eastern sections. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with light rainshowers

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/10/07 SOURCE PAGASA

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Second FRONTPAGE

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2007

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Abu bomber slain in clash

ANOTHER LEADING OPERATIVE OF THE al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group was killed by government soldiers in Sulu, military spokesmen said yesterday, as the country moves into high alert for the opening of twin Asian summits in Cebu.

Binang Sali, described as the "founder and spiritual adviser of the Abu Sayyaf's urban terrorist group," was reported killed in a five-minute shootout with army Scout Rangers in a mountain village in Patikul, Jolo island on Tuesday.

His death "translates to one bomber less that could carry out an attack on any target during the summits," said Armed Forces chief of staff Hermogenes Esperon, who inspected some 5,000 troops and policemen mobilized to guard senior ministers now meeting for the East Asia summit and 16 heads of state expected for tomorrow's opening of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

The summits were postponed last December due to a storm and security concerns.

Tawi-Tawi battle

Sali, who is blamed for a series of bomb attacks on Jolo and two high-profile kidnap-for-ransom cases involving wealthy local traders last year, is the seventh suspected terrorist reported killed in the past week. He carried a P1-million price on his head.

Last Saturday, a team of Philippine Marines reported the killing of six Islamic militants, including an Indonesian, in a sea battle near the island of Tawi-Tawi.

Another suspected terrorist was arrested in Manila on Monday. Police identified him as Ricardo Ayeras alias Abdul Kareem of the Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement that is suspected of being behind the 2005 Valentine's Day bus bombing in Makati that killed four and injured 60 others.

The Philippines is on alert for any possible attacks during the summit, either on Cebu or elsewhere in the country.

"Any bombing, whether carried out in the Visayas or in Luzon during the summit would be tantamount to a bombing in Cebu," Esperon said in a statement.

Australia, Britain and Canada have warned of possible bombings in the south of the country during the Cebu summits.

Agitators

But Oscar Calderon, the national police chief, was quoted in a Reuters report as saying they were more concerned with planned protests by leftist groups than plots by Muslim militants to disrupt the meeting.

"We will be confronted by agitators," Calderon told anti-riot police officers during an inspection on Wednesday.

Hundreds of protesters are expected in Cebu for the summit and the military has put hundreds of unarmed soldiers on standby to help police control the crowds. *Reuters with Dona Pazzibugan*

Censors lift ban on Erap film, but . . .

THE APPEALS COMMITTEE OF THE Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTCRB) agreed yesterday to lift the ban on a biographical film about deposed president Joseph Estrada if certain changes were made.

But Estrada's lawyer said the proposed alterations, which include removing the portions challenging the legality of his ouster, were not acceptable.

"These conditions make the showing impossible to be done," said Rufus Rodriguez in a television interview, adding that Estrada would not allow "any change in what he perceives to be his real life story."

The film, "Ang Mabuhay Para sa Masa" (To Live for the Masses), traces Estrada's career from movie star to small-town mayor to president elected by a landslide in 1998, ending with his ouster in the face of corruption charges. It contends that the powerful Philippine Catholic church conspired with big business to topple Estrada illegally.

The MTRCB initially refused to allow the video to be broadcast on television, saying it was libelous and contained false information. It was given an X-rating, which effectively banned it from public showing because no theaters were licensed to exhibit X-rated films.

Yesterday, the appeals committee created by Malacañang said it would now allow its broadcast if certain portions were removed and "some kind of balancing factor featuring the replies of the persons deferred or libelled" were added.

The board also said the video could also be aired intact after the resolution of graft charges against Estrada. It said the film contained materials related to his pending plunder case and were therefore sub-judice.

Rodriguez said Estrada would challenge the decision in the Supreme Court.

In a statement, the five-member MTCRB appeals body said the Jan. 5 decision came after it consulted with various sectors, including past chairs of the MTCRB like Manuel Morato.

The members of the committee are Secretary Cecile Guidote Alvarez of the National Commission on Culture and Arts; Press Undersecretary Robert Rivera; Commissioner Michael Francis Acebedo Lopez of the National Youth Commission; Ric Camaligan of SM Leisure Group and Dody Lacuna, public affairs manager of RPN 9.

President Arroyo formed the appeals committee after the documentary producers, Publikasia, sought the help of the Palace to review the MTCRB decision which gave the film an X-rating and disapproved its showing on television.

Alvarez, who was in Malacañang yesterday, told reporters that the committee consulted many people before coming up with the decision which she stressed was unanimous and "absolutely fair."

"You do know that the right of free expression is not absolute. Everything has a restriction and national welfare is preeminent," she said. She added the committee would stand by its decision in court. *AFP with Christine Avendaño*

Cops have new witness vs Abra governor

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE HAVE A NEW WITNESS WHO THEY say can link Abra governor Vicente Valera to the murder of Rep. Luis Bersamin amid reports that their strongest witness so far—"confessed lookout" Rufino Panday—would retract his confession.

The new witness is identified only as "Joseph."

According to Police Supt. Benjamin Delos Santos of Task Force Bersamin, "Joseph" had seen suspected triggerman Dominador Barbosa accompany Gov. Valera to the Quezon City residence of model Hergielyn Dimagiba weeks before the murder.

This contradicts the claim of Valera that he does not know Barbosa, and has nothing to do with the shooting of Bersamin at the parking lot of the Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City last Dec. 16

Joseph, a neighbor of Dimagiba, gave a statement to police yesterday saying he also saw another suspect in the case, Freddie Dupo, former Vice Mayor of La Paz town in Abra, accompany Valera to the house of the pretty 25-year-old model.

The superintendent said they showed a recent picture of triggerman Barbosa to Joseph and he confirmed that Barbosa was seen with Valera during his trips to Dimagiba's house in Teresa Heights, Quezon City.

"While these are circumstantial evidence, it debunks claims made by the governor that he does not know these people (Dupo and Barbosa)," Delos Santos said.

Task Force Bersamin head director Jesus Verzosa also asserted that the statements of Joseph would "prove the governor was lying" when he said Dimagiba was just a friend.

Earlier, Joseph told a television station that he frequently saw Valera at Dimagiba's house and that obviously the two had an intimate relationship. The witness claimed he sometimes saw Dimagiba, dressed in a nightie, kiss Valera goodbye.

Joseph also said he saw Valera frequently at the eatery and internet café owned by Dimagiba.

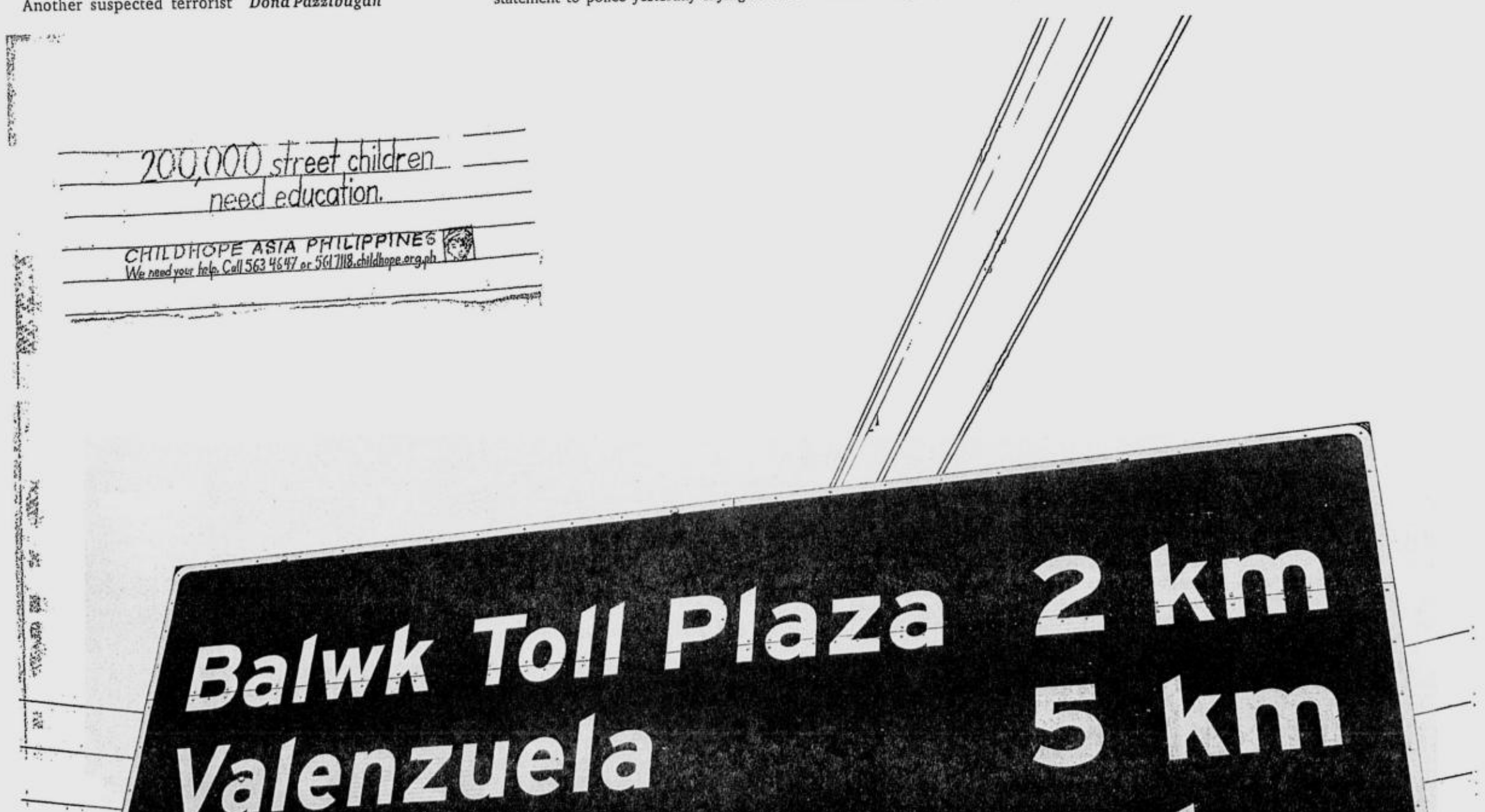
Dimagiba has vehemently denied this, saying Valera was just a "family friend."

But investigators said they will continue to probe suspicions that Dimagiba knew intimate details of the plan to kill Bersamin.

Delos Santos said the statements of Joseph would open Dimagiba to charges of perjury and obstruction of justice, or even of complicity in the Bersamin murder.

Task Force Bersamin's main witness, former army M/Sgt. Rufino Panday had reportedly told police that Valera took out a P5 million contract to kill his political rival, and it was Dupo who put together a team to kill Bersamin.

But Panday's son and lawyer Galileo Angeles said the former soldier was tortured to make that confession. *With reports from Miko Morelos*



RP couple held in HK for airplane bomb joke

A FILIPINO COUPLE WAS held by Hong Kong airport security authorities yesterday after the husband made a bomb joke inside a plane before it left for Manila, an aviation official said.

Joselito Daza and his wife Sarah were led off the Cebu Pacific plane, and taken into custody by Hong Kong airport security personnel after the stewardess reported the man's remarks.

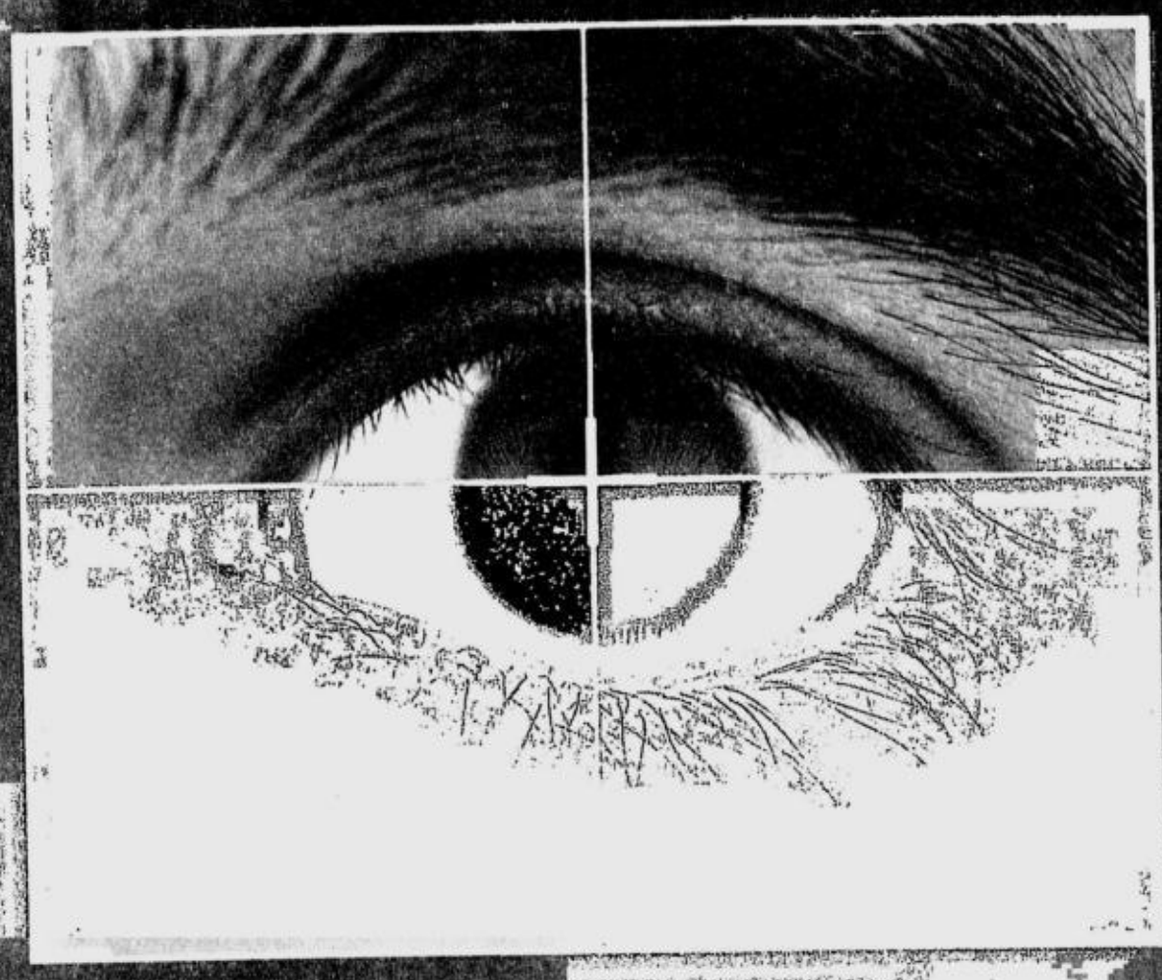
"He told the stewardess he had a bomb inside his bag," said Angel Atutubo, Manila International Airport's assistant general manager for security. "For us in security, that is something serious."

He did not provide further details.

In September, a Filipino woman was taken off a domestic flight for making comments about a bomb, but she was allowed to leave on the next flight after she apologized.

Philippine authorities have posted signs at the airport warning passengers against any bomb jokes. *AP*

20/20 in 30 seconds*



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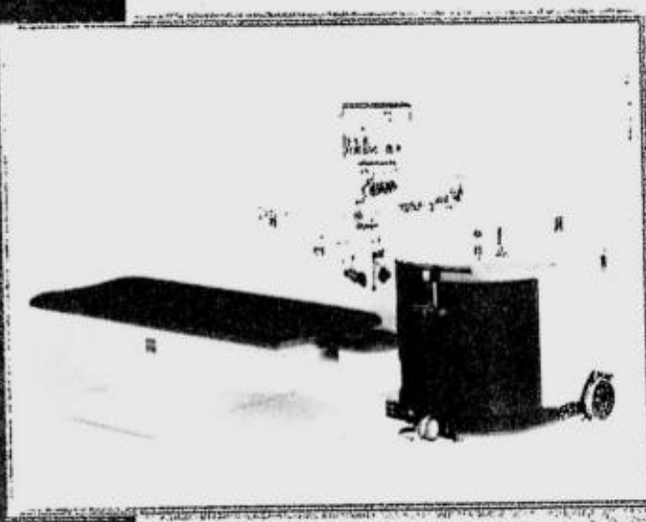

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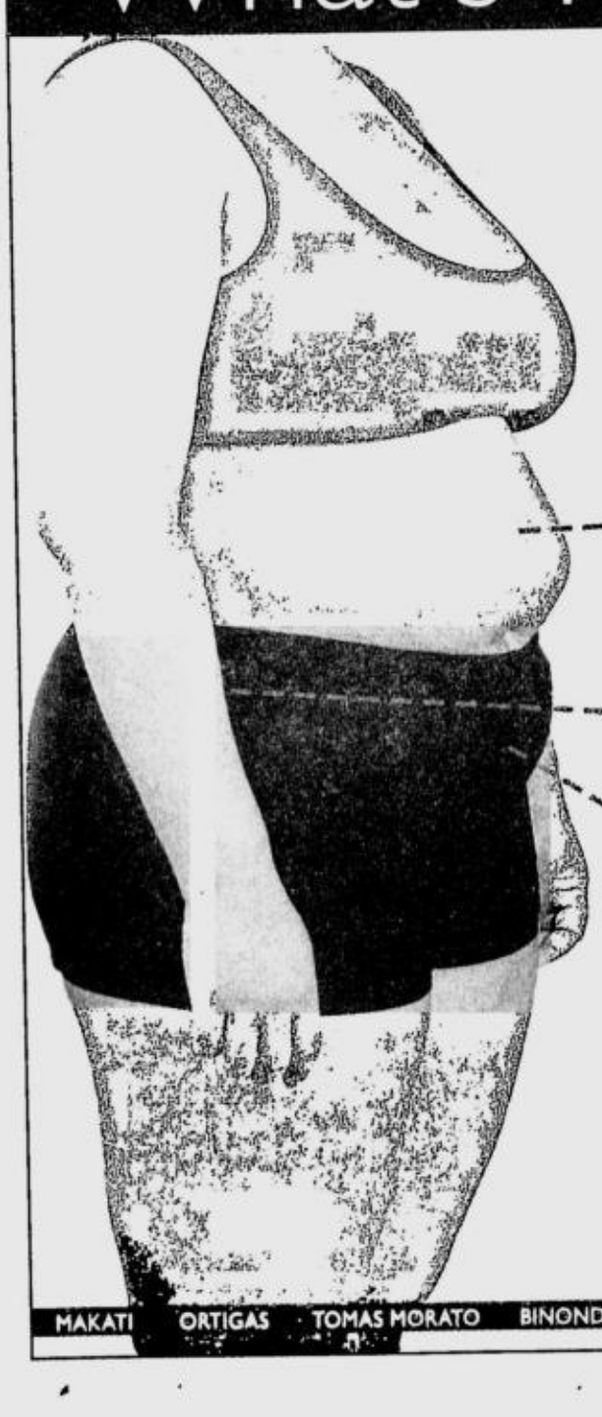
What's Your New Year's Resolution?



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Jimenez says Lacson made up story on $14-M payoff

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER MANILA REP. MARK Jimenez yesterday said that Sen. Panfilo Lacson made up the story on the $14-million payoff for the awarding of a power contract to an Argentine firm to get back at former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

The contract was awarded to the Argentine firm Impsa during the Estrada administration.

In an interview, Jimenez said there was no truth to Lacson's claim that the $2 million, which Perez had supposedly extorted from Jimenez in exchange for the latter's "peace of mind," was part of the bribe.

Lacson, who asked the government to explain where the remaining $12 million went, said his information came from Jimenez himself.

But Jimenez denied this, and called Lacson a "liar."

No bribery

"That's a [figment] of his own opportunist imagination. Lacson always has a fiction of something that happened but did not happen like his money in USA, like his Kuratong Baleleng [case], like the Dacer case. Why don't you ask him. He's creating something that is a novelty," Jimenez said.

PEREZ

LACSON

Jimenez said the charges against Perez and three others by the Ombudsman were in connection with an extortion case.

Jimenez said there was no missing $12 million because there was no bribery.

"You're talking of naming names in this issue, of this bribe, but there's none. It's an extortion. So you can't name names because there's none," he said.

Jimenez said the senator should explain where he got his own figures.

He said that Lacson visited him in Miami, Florida, when he was on house arrest during his indictment for the tax evasion and illegal campaign distributions charges filed against him by the US government.

Earlier, he told the INQUIRER that Lacson was interested in some documents during his visit.

"He was there on a mission but my mission was to pray so we did not understand each other," Jimenez said. "He came when I was on house arrest, for his own motive, but I said I was praying."

Informed that Lacson had apologized over the radio for whatever discrepancy in the figures regarding the Perez case, Jimenez said the senator should repent for his sins.

"I hope he prays and then maybe God will forgive him. God will have to forgive him first before I forgive him or anybody like Nani Perez," Jimenez said.

He said such was also the case of his former friend, deposed President Joseph Estrada, who insists he is innocent of the plunder charge filed against him.

Lacson betrays friends

Jimenez accused Lacson, a former police chief, of betraying two of his friends now in the United States—former police officers Michael Ray Aquino and Cesar Mancao.

Aquino is detained while Mancao has been released on bail in the United States. Both are due for sentencing.

Jimenez said he would not complain if Perez and company were not charged with bribery or plunder.

"No bribery was involved. Extortion. What I did is what I have to do for my family," he said.

Jimenez said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez was wrong in saying that he should be charged for being a "bribe-giver."

"Gonzalez should study law. I'm not a bribe giver. Somebody extorted from me. If he knows very well about the story of the bribe giver, maybe he is being bribed," Jimenez said.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF President Arroyo concurrently the defense secretary goes to her office in Camp Aguinaldo on Wednesday to do some work. The DND post has been vacant since Avelino Cruz resigned in December last year. LYN RILLON

Mark Jimenez clears GMA in extortion

From page A1

In a privilege speech in 2002, Jimenez, then a congressman of Manila, said that Perez had demanded that he execute an affidavit against cronies of former President Joseph Estrada, which would be used against them if they would not support Ms Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

Jimenez said that when he refused, Perez cursed and threatened him in front of his wife at their home in Forbes Park in Makati City in the third week of January of 2001, or shortly after Estrada was ousted.

It was Escaler who came up with the proposition that he just cough up $2 million, to which Perez agreed, according to Jimenez.

The $2 million allegedly came from a $14-million bribe for the approval of the contract for the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric plant in Laguna won by an Argentine firm.

The contract won by the Argentine firm was approved by the Estrada administration and was allegedly brokered by Jimenez, then a presidential adviser on Latin American affairs.

Jimenez said the $2 million was not related to the power plant deal. *(See related story above.)*

Newly found friendship

He insisted that Malacañang had nothing to do with the Ombudsman's decision to file the case, which stemmed from his extortion complaint against Perez at the Ombudsman.

His original complaint included plunder and obstruction of justice.

Jimenez also dismissed speculations that the charges would be filed as a result of his friendship with Ms Arroyo.

He told the INQUIRER that he met with the President a week after he arrived in December 2005 from the United States where he served two years and three months in prison.

A Miami court convicted Jimenez of tax fraud and of giving illegal campaign contributions in 1998 to the election campaign of US President Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party.

That year, he flew back to the Philippines with his family shortly before he was charged before a US District Court in Washington D.C. with tax evasion and illegal campaign contributions.

Jimenez was extradited to the United States in December 2002.

Born Mario Crespo, Jimenez left the Philippines in the 1980s, changed his name and made a home for himself in Miami, Florida, where he built a fortune selling computer parts in Latin America.

Peace, love

"I went to meet her at her [Ms Arroyo] house in Forbes Park. We talked of peace. We talked of love. We talked of good things for the Filipino people," he said of his meeting with Ms Arroyo in December 2005.

Jimenez said it was not important who brokered the meeting with the President, adding that he went home satisfied with the outcome.

"Personal *na naming dalawa* (It's personal between us)," he said of his conversation with the President. "She's also the one telling me peace. It was a mutual agreement, mutual idea, mutual spirit."

Asked to describe his relationship with Ms Arroyo, Jimenez said: "My relationship with the President is the same as that of every Filipino—a Filipino whom the President should recognize as one of her constituents," the former congressman said.

Lualhati Foundation

His relationship with the President is anything but ordinary.

In 2002, Malacañang admitted through then presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao that the Lualhati Foundation, identified with the First Couple, received checks amounting to P8 million from Jimenez in 1999, when Ms Arroyo was still Vice President and social welfare secretary.

But then Rep. Willie Villarama, chief of staff of Ms Arroyo when she was Vice President, said that he collected checks amounting to P18 million from Jimenez.

Vilarama said the amount was for another foundation of Ms Arroyo, the Ginintuan at Makabayang Alay Foundation.

With Jimenez himself putting the figure at P8 million, Malacañang was prompted to ask Villarama where the P10 million went.

Following this controversy, the Lualhati Foundation announced that it was folding up, saying that because of the controversy surrounding Jimenez's contribution, it would be difficult for the group to solicit donations from other donors.

Timing

Jimenez said he was not surprised at the timing of the Ombudsman's announcement to finally file the case against Perez, saying he expected that it would happen anytime.

He said he was not expecting the filing of additional criminal charges like plunder against Perez and company because he merely complained about extortion.

"What I did is what I have to do for my family. What other people want to do is their own recourse. That is not my recourse. Mine was to redeem my children, and my name in the name of my children," he said.

Redemption

Jimenez said the filing of the extortion case against Perez was part of the process of his redemption.

"All of this is God's justice and these are all gift and grace of God to my children," he said.

On Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's statement that Perez was innocent, Jimenez said what Ermita believed was "irrelevant."

He said: "Look, I'm not angry or bitter. I'm here because of what happened to my family. What happened to my family? They were throwing stones at me for 100 times and all those stones were wrong but they hit my children."

He continued: "I'm not fighting for myself or my family. I'm fighting for you. I'm fighting for the Philippines, which has been abused and betrayed.

"Do you understand what I'm trying to do? Maybe week by week you'll understand what this is all about. This is all about what is happening to our country and why we are accepting these."

Politics of life

Jimenez reiterated his decision not to join politics, saying he is now involved in the "politics of life."

If he meant a life without controversy, it's a turnaround from the one he led during the Estrada administration.

Jimenez was called a "corporate genius" by Estrada for having brokered two big corporate deals—the $750 million (P30-billion) First Pacific Co. Ltd. takeover of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in November 1998 and the P31-billion merger of Philippine Commercial and Industrial Bank and Equitable Bank in May 1999.

Jimenez was rumored to have received $50 million for his efforts in the PLDT-First Pacific deal.

In a sworn statement, he said that Estrada allegedly received P126 million in advance commission for the Equitable-PCIBank merger.

Palace admits Perez case a Pandora's box

From page A1

on Malacañang to keep its hands off in the extortion and graft raps against Perez.

"Let justice take its course, let the chips fall where they may," said Rufus Rodriguez, Estrada's spokesperson.

Verdict before case filed

"This is a case of corruption and extortion, and it is most unseemly and unethical for the executive secretary to pronounce a verdict even before the case is brought before the antigraft [court]," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez denied allegations that Estrada was involved in the Impsa bribery issue, pointing out that it was Jimenez who brokered the contract and gave the $2 million to Perez.

He said the contract was given the go-signal by Ms Arroyo after Perez issued a legal opinion on the contract two days after Estrada left Malacañang on Jan. 20, 2001.

Estrada has maintained that the negotiations for the Impsa power project in Caliraya, Laguna, began during the Ramos administration.

Argentina visit

During his state visit to Argentina in 1999, Estrada was advised by senior officials of his host country that they remained interested in pursuing the project.

Estrada was brought to the headquarters of Argentina's Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima to show the company's capability to complete the multimillion-dollar project.

But Estrada cancelled the negotiations after Impsa officials, through Jimenez, tried to bribe him with $14 million in exchange for his approval of a "sovereign guarantee" for the project.

A sovereign guarantee requires the national government to assume the liabilities of a private Philippine company should it be unable to pay its debts to a contractor.

Estrada said no

"President Estrada would not hear of any sovereign guarantee that would only bring additional hardships to the people and that is the reason this project was shelved under his administration," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said Estrada had the sole distinction of being the only Philippine president who refused to grant sovereign guarantees to power plant projects.

Rodriguez likewise called on Jimenez to reveal where the balance of $12 million from the total $14-million bribe went.

"The entire truth must finally be told. In the interest of justice and clearing up the name of President Estrada, who has been unfairly dragged into this extortion case, Jimenez should reveal all he knows about this," Rodriguez said.

Dig deeper

In the Senate, opposition Senators Panfilo Lacson and Luisa "Loi" Ejercito-Estrada asked the Sandiganbayan to dig deeper into the extortion charge filed against Perez.

Both insisted that the $2 million could be part of the $14-million bribe to Arroyo administration officials in 2001 for the approval of the contract for the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric plant won by Impsa.

Lacson said that the antigraft court should not limit its inquiry into the $2-million extortion, but dig deeper into the mystery behind the $14-million bribe.

"If we stop at the $2-million extortion, we might not be able to uncover the mystery on the $14 million. The fact remains that the power purchase agreement was signed, and that's why we're paying for high power rates now," he said in an interview over dzMM.

"Remember that President Erap did not sign this. And this was signed as soon as President Arroyo assumed the presidency, perhaps because of the $14 million that benefited only a few but is making all consumers suffer. This is just my concern," he added.

Jimenez badgered Erap

Lacson said that if his statements had hurt Jimenez, he was offering his apologies. He, however, maintained that he based his statements on Jimenez's disclosure on the $2-million extortion in 2001.

Senator Estrada, wife of Estrada, said it was illogical for the Ombudsman not to link the extortion to the approval of the Impsa deal.

"Up to the last days of President Erap in Malacañang, Jimenez had been badgering him to approve the contract, even hinting that funds are available for projects of the Office of the President. So no way can this probe be limited only to the former justice secretary," she said in a statement.

Loi: Erap's vindication

"We now dare Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez to show her mettle and crack the whip on all those involved up to Malacañang and not just Perez. For the sake of truth and justice, I will talk to President Erap and ask him if he would be willing to share his knowledge of this deal like he did when he testified in the Senate on the same issue," she added.

Senator Estrada said the Ombudsman ruling was a vindication for her husband as well as the entire Estrada clan.

"For too long, the government and the prosecutors in President Erap's plunder trial have been trying to link this anomalous deal to him in a vain attempt to divert public attention from the real culprits, Perez and other ranking Palace officials," she said.

The Impsa deal was consummated "in an indecent and hasty manner when Mrs. Arroyo grabbed the presidency from him in 2001," she added.

At his weekly briefing, Ermita said that if Perez was confident that he did nothing wrong, "we just have to live by it.

"They can say it's self-serving. Let the trial speak for itself and find out who will be affected by the outcome," he said.

Ermita said that in a conversation he had with Perez "a long time ago," his party mate brushed aside the charges hurled by Jimenez.

"He (Perez) said the charges against him were not accurate," the executive secretary said.

The Ombudsman has found probable cause to file charges against Perez in the Sandiganbayan.

A publicity stunt, says Gonzalez

By Armand N. Nocum

"A PUBLICITY STUNT" WAS how Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez described Sen. Panfilo Lacson's announced willingness to charge him with obstruction of justice before the Sandiganbayan for supposedly sitting on documents that would pin down Hernando Perez for extortion.

Gonzalez also said in a phone interview yesterday that Lacson would be unable to make the case stick: "There is no basis for that case. In the first place, he has been aware of this issue for the last two years because the matter has been sitting at the Commission on Appointments."

According to Gonzalez, Lacson is resurrecting an issue that has been clarified, particularly during his confirmation hearings presided over by the senator, who was then chair of the commission's justice committee.

"Of course that's a publicity stunt," the justice secretary said when asked whether he believed that Lacson was riding on the issue.

He described the planned charges as "old hat and politically motivated," and said he was willing to face the issue squarely: "Bring it on. I welcome that. I cannot prevent anybody from filing anything."

Gonzalez said he could not be accused of obstruction of justice because the issue was primarily being investigated by the Office of the Ombudsman.

"There was no bad faith on my part," he declared.

He lamented that while he was willing to explain his side, his political enemies had been looking for a chance to hit him and he had "always been misunderstood."

RP takes key role in pro-life advocacy

By Christian V. Esguerra

PREDOMINANTLY CATHOLIC PHIlippines is taking a crucial role in the Vatican-led effort to combat threats to human life and the family in this part of the world.

For the second time in two years, the country was the venue of an international gathering of experts on the thorny issue of bioethics, an indication of the important role the Philippines plays in the preservation of human life.

"It probably has something to do with our strong faith that can help in the formation of values and virtues," Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines president, said in a press conference at the 2007 International Conference on Bioethics and the Family in Mandaluyong.

In 2005, the Philippines has also been the site of the International Congress on Bioethics held at the University of Santo Tomas. It was the first time that the congress, sponsored by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life, was held in Asia.

'Death bills'

Lagdameo said the two significant events held in the country indicated that "we're really being encouraged to continue our advocacy."

At present, he said, the country was under threat from what he called "death bills" that included tendencies toward "euthanasia, divorce, abortion, total depopulation and homosexual agenda."

"We shouldn't allow ourselves to be pushed by the current of campaigns that had happened and are still happening in other countries," he told reporters in Filipino.

Lagdameo cited cases in Europe and some Asian countries that had earlier restricted population growth only to experience an aging population.

"In Japan, there are too many people living all the way up to 80 and 90, and not enough people have been born," economist Dr. Bernardo Villegas of the University of Asia and the Pacific said in a 2005 forum. "So there will come a time when there will not be enough young people to take care of the aging population."

One-child policy

Villegas said China was already going through this crisis owing to its one-child policy: "What's happening is, because of the one-child policy, they are already experiencing the problem of a developed country like Japan. China is going to be the first country in the history of humanity that will have an aging population even before it becomes a developed country."

Lagdameo yesterday welcomed a report from the Commission on Population that said that the country's current growth rate stood at 1.95 percent. Proponents of population management had been insisting that the rate was at least 2.3 percent.

With a replacement rate of 2.1 percent, he said the population would actually experience a slower growth rate in the coming years.

The Vatican conference, which ended yesterday, also addressed controversial bioethical issues, such as the beginning of human life, euthanasia, and contraception.

The gathering sought to settle the contentious issue on the human embryo, the subject of aggressive scientific researchers over the last several years.

Dr. John Wilke, chair and president of the International Right to Life Federation, said the debate was summed up in two questions: when does human life begin and at what stage of development should human life be protected?

Human embryo

"The human embryo is a human person, body and soul, from the moment of his/her conception, endowed with all the potentialities, proper identity, individuality, and uniqueness, and hence has an inherent dignity that must be respected and protected throughout his/her entire life," delegates said in the conference declaration read by Lagdameo.

"Created in the image of God, the human embryo has God-given inviolable rights and is destined to eternal life."

Delegates also warned against "sharp increases in adultery, premarital sex and homosexual activity" triggered by contraception.

"With it, the abominable crime of abortion has been condoned and even considered a right," they lamented.

"This loss of respect and care for human life at its beginning has led to the loss of respect and care at its natural end, as in the evils of euthanasia and abandonment of the elderly and the handicapped."

Bishop Elio Sgreccia, president of the Pontifical Academy of Life, cited some couples' "tendency for the perfect child" as supposedly shown by attempts to "eliminate" the possibility of imperfect babies at the level of prenatal diagnosis.

"It's a very terrible tendency," he said in the press conference.

Ex-general to run GMA's situation room

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS appointed a former general to head her "situation room" in Malacañang.

In a briefing, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced that Deputy National Security Adviser Virtus Gil has been given the rank of Undersecretary under the Office of the President to run the Chief Executive's situation room.

Ermita said Gil, who retired as police deputy director general in 2005, was "well qualified" for the post despite criticisms that the President had been filling up key government posts with former military and police officers.

"(He) was a three-star general and was number two or three when he retired. Considering that very sensitive nature of the presidential situation room, I think it should be second nature for a retired general whether police or armed forces to be able to run the office effectively and efficiently," Ermita said.

The situation room was created a few years ago when the President wanted the latest information on disasters, terrorist attacks, and military uprisings at her fingertips and this has always been manned by civilians.

"The situation room is where the President gets just about anything useful to keep her informed on what is going on about important events such as calamities and bombings. It is not an ordinary situation room," Ermita said.

Aside from Gil, the other new appointees announced by Ermita were Ellaine Rose A. Sanchez-Corro as assistant solicitor general, Jessup Navarro as National Food Authority administrator, Bernadette Romulo-Puyat as Agriculture undersecretary for special concerns, and Josyline V. Chio-Javelosa as Agriculture assistant secretary. *Gil Cabacungan*

Correction

IN THE JAN. 10 ISSUE, a column on Page A13 by Michael Tan—"Wanted: Consumerism"—misstated the name of the consumer advocate who monitors the prices of petroleum products. He is Raul Concepcion—not Jose Concepcion Jr.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 11, 2007
1st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 3:7-14
Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

A leper came to Jesus and begged him, "If you so will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." The leprosy left the man at once and he was made clean. As Jesus sent the man away, he sternly warned him, "Don't tell anyone about this, but go and show yourself to the priest and for the cleansing bring the offering ordered by Moses; in this way you will make your declaration."

However, as soon as the man went out, he began spreading the news everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter any town. But even though he stayed in the rural areas, people came to him from everywhere.

Commentary

Jesus has tended to everyone's needs, then goes alone to pray and is absorbed in prayer. Then he leaves prayer to preach the gospel. All seek him, even the lepers, outcasts and public sinners. A leper approaches and says, "If you so will, you can make me clean." Jesus moves in pity and touches him. This is what he has come for: to preach holiness and justice, to be merciful and to draw all to him.

Our hearts—are they hardened with sin, with habits of insensitivity and selfishness? Have we gone astray and fallen away from God? Today we stand before God, knowing that God's will in Jesus is always to make whole, to heal, and to set free. But we should ask and hope for Jesus' touch and words—or we should offer those words and touch to others in need.

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Guimaras folk call for Petron boycott; CBCP expresses sympathy

By David Israel Sinay
Inquirer Visayas
and Abigail L. Ho *in Manila*

ILOILO CITY—CATHOLIC BISHops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo expressed sympathy for the plight of Guimaras residents affected by the oil spill last year but did not categorically support the boycott of Petron Corp. products initiated by the parish pastoral council in Nueva Valencia town.

In a letter dated Jan. 2, 2007, Lagdameo said he read the Nueva Valencia parish's "collective position paper and urgent appeal for the resolution of the problems that have been caused by Petron/Solar I Oil Spill in Nueva Valencia."

He said he was "in sympathy and solidarity" with the Nueva Valencia residents as they expressed their "just demands from the government and Petron for restitution for the damage brought about by the oil spill last August."

"The government and Petron have the moral obligation to hasten the full relief, rehabilitation and recovery of your tragically damaged barangays," Lagdameo said. He added that the CBCP would continue to help Guimaras residents through Jaro Archdiocesan Social Action Center (Jasac) and the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC).

Fr. Antonio Chan, the St. Vincent Ferrer PPC president and parish priest, led the town residents in writing a "people's manifesto" on Dec. 28, 2006 calling for a boycott of Petron products. Hundreds of parishioners and residents from San Lorenzo and Sibunag town attended the affair, according to Chan.

Manifesto

Jasac director Msgr. Meliton Oso said his office had sent through fax a copy of the manifesto to all dioceses in Western Visayas and to the national office of the social action center for circulation in all dioceses and 97 prelatures in the country.

"All priests were furnished a copy of the manifesto. We encourage [the parishioners] to stop patronizing [Petron products], to encourage friends to support [the initiative] and to post streamers rejecting Petron products," he said.

The manifesto also asked the government to penalize those responsible for the oil spill. It further stated that Petron should be fully accountable for the incident and should conduct a thorough cleanup of the oil sludge acceptable to the affected people of Guimaras.

Retrieval of oil urged

The manifesto also sought the immediate retrieval of the remaining bunker fuel in the sunken oil tanker. Solar I remains at the bottom of the sea off Guimaras since it sank in choppy waters while ferrying 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel oil for Petron from Bataan to Zamboanga.

And now the 'iPhone' reinvents the cell phone

From page A1

digital device. It's like having your life in your pocket."

Apple's shares surged $4.20, or 4.9 percent, to $89.67 in the immediate wake of the company's announcement.

Shares of mobile phone makers, including Nokia, Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics, on Wednesday slipped on worries about their ability to compete with Apple's iPhone.

Ultra-slim

The iPhone will be ultra-slim—less than half-an-inch (1.3 centimeters) thick—boasting a phone, Internet capability and an MP3 player as well as featuring a two-megapixel digital camera, Jobs said.

Two versions of the iPhone will be released—a four-gigabyte version priced at $499 and an eight-gigabyte version priced at $599. The devices will be shipped to US retail stores in June, Jobs said.

Apple expects to make it available in Asia by 2008.

"This is a leapfrog product with a revolutionary new interface with software five years ahead of any other phone and desktop class applications, not those crippled applications you find on those other phones," Jobs said.

"Most advanced phones are called smart phones. But they are actually not so smart, and really not so easy to use," he added.

"When you get a chance to get your hands on it, I think you'll agree, we've reinvented the phone."

Analysts had been expecting Jobs to unveil the nifty new device at the conference, a move that aims to capitalize on the company's wildly popular iPod digital music player.

Jobs said he was confident the three-device-in-one iPhone would become the next iconic, must-have gadget, following on from the iPod phenomenon, despite competition.

"LIKE HAVING THE INTERNET IN YOUR POCKET," Apple Computer CEO Steve Jobs describes the iPhone at its unveiling on Tuesday in San Francisco. AFP

Stiff competition

"We always have stiff competition," Jobs said. "That's just the nature of the business."

The Apple chief executive said he expected the company to sell 10 million iPhones by end-2008, a tiny fraction of the 1 billion handsets sold globally per year, analysts said.

Shares of Nokia, the world's top handset maker, fell 2.2 percent to 14.63 euros on Wednesday, while Sweden's Ericsson was down 1.4 percent.

"It's a short-term sentiment impact. It's a much hyped story. Apple's a great marketing machine, but from the sheer volumes, it's not going to make a huge difference," said a trader in London.

Some representatives of cell phone makers attending an electronics show in Las Vegas, Nevada, were likewise unimpressed.

"We launched the first of these devices in 2002," Nokia Communications Multimedia director Kari Tuutti told Agence France Presse at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, adding that 40 million devices with Internet, music and a camera were sold last year.

"This is the fastest growing segment—250 million units are expected to be sold in 2008," he said. "There is plenty of room for many players in this growing market."

Apple has crushed competitors in the music player market since the release of the iPod. To date, Apple has sold two billion songs on iTunes, its online music service. "That's five million songs a day, making Apple the fourth largest music vendor," Jobs said.

Desktop applications

The new iPhone will also boast desktop class applications, Jobs said.

To demonstrate, he accessed Google maps satellite imaging and within seconds zoomed in on the Washington Monument, then the Eiffel Tower, and finally checked Apple's rapidly rising stock.

He also phoned a local coffee bar and jokingly ordered 4,000 lattes for his assembled guests.

Jobs also unveiled a separate device that will allow users to transfer video from their computers to televisions.

The set-top unit known as Apple TV enables viewers to stream digitally downloaded video from a desktop or laptop computer to a television, complementing Apple's online film service which is available through its iTunes store.

Apple TV comes equipped with a 40-gigabyte hard drive capable of storing up to 50 hours of video programming. It will be able to store videos, photos and music sent from computers within wireless range.

The video box will be available in February and be priced at $299. *Reports from AFP and Reuters*

Six killed, 32 hurt in Cotabato bombings

From page A1

ities were still trying to determine what type of bomb was used.

The INQUIRER learned that no police officer was at the outpost at the time of incident because they allegedly accompanied a complainant to the main police station, about 3 kilometers away.

The bombings occurred just as authorities were on heightened alert two days before Asian leaders were due to arrive in Cebu City for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit.

In the first explosion, the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) said that three died instantly—two women and a 10-year-old boy—while three others expired while being treated at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Dead on the spot were Marlyn Magalino, Marjorie dela Cruz and Junjun Tiongson.

Vendors at the public market told the INQUIRER it was the most powerful bomb that ever exploded in the city.

"We could feel the ground shaking and the sound was deafening," a stall vendor who asked not to be named said.

The blast ripped apart a lottery outlet across the public market, said Senior Supt. Alfredo Toroctocon, the city police chief.

Toroctocon said investigators were still trying to determine what type of explosive was used in the blast.

Authorities would also not speculate on who could be behind the attack.

"It is premature to blame the attack on any group. We are still investigating," said regional police chief German Doria.

Doria said police also were looking into the possibility that the blast stemmed from the failure of the lottery outlet operator to pay winners of a lottery draw.

"This lotto outlet closed three days ago because many bettors won ... then all of a sudden an explosion occurred in front of the lotto outlet," Doria said.

In the past, the Abu Sayyaf group, the Philippines' most dangerous militant group which has links to the regional terrorist network Jemaah Islamiyah, had targeted the city.

Muslim separatists immediately condemned the latest blasts.

Eid Kabalu, spokesperson of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, condemned the bomb attacks and urged police authorities and other law enforcement agencies to do their best to arrest the perpetrators.

Kabalu said the MILF has nothing to do with the bombing and it will never "tolerate or do such a demonic act."

Western governments had warned that militants could bomb the Asean summit on Jan. 13-15 or attack cities in the South.

The Philippines, which holds the rotating chairmanship of Asean, had postponed the original summit last month, ostensibly due to a typhoon but days after the Australian, US and British embassies warned terrorists would try to disrupt it.

Police said there was no specific threat in Cebu, guarded by around 13,000 police and soldiers, but put the entire country on high alert.

Doria said the bombing might have been also a retaliation by local Muslim terror group Abu Sayyaf for recent military killings of some of its senior members. *(See related story on Page A2.)*

He also said the Abu Sayyaf might have planted the bomb to divert the military's focus on flushing them out of the remote southwestern island of Jolo.

At least 7,000 soldiers and some US military advisers are on Jolo, a sprawling, mountainous island, to combat the Abu Sayyaf.

In Iligan City, a local bomb disposal team disabled a suspected explosive planted near the Security Bank along Quezon Avenue on Tuesday afternoon.

The suspected explosive was hidden inside a gift-wrapped box and was found by a bank guard.

Senior Supt. Virgilio Ranes, city police director, ordered policemen to cordon off the area and disable the suspected bomb through the use of a disruptor device. The suspected bomb was later detonated.

Authorities said they recovered "powder and splinter materials" when they inspected the remains of the suspected bomb.

The recovered materials would be tested to determine their chemical composition, according to Santos Garcia, head of the local bomb squad. *With reports from Charlie Señase, Allan Nawal, Rolly Pinsoy and Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao, Reuters, AP*

Slim waist eternal standard of beauty, say US scientists

From page A1

prevailing fashion, culture or ethnicity, and on the eye of the beholder.

For instance, in Victorian England, a tiny, puckered mouth was the zenith of pulchritude. Today, the rosebud look has been replaced by what has been called the trout look, as women in Western cultures strive to make their mouths look as wide and full-lipped as possible. (Think Angelina Jolie.)

In many societies, the focus of secondary erogenous zones has roamed over ankles, necks and knees, and makeup and hairstyles change according to the mode.

The desired female morphology has shifted too, driven in part by prosperity and the social advancement of women. In the 1950s, Marilyn Monroe was the template of feminine beauty; today, she would be encouraged to sign up at Weightwatchers.

Ain't so

So it would seem that the "beauty standard" does not exist—that there is no eternal benchmark, only a chaotically whizzing merry-go-round.

Not so for evolutionary psychologists.

For them, fashion is a fluffy cover for a force that is deeper, remorseless and unchanging, as old and enduring as our genes—the Darwinian drive of survival and genetic fitness.

In an innovative test of these rival hypotheses, scientists at the University of Texas at Austin and at Harvard University trawled through three centuries of English-language literature and through three Asian literary classics dating back nearly 2,000 years.

Their goal: Which parts of the woman's body were praised as beautiful by writers across the ages?

Their sources were a website, Literature Online, for English literature from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries; Chinese sixth-dynasty palace poetry (from the fourth to the sixth centuries A.D.); and two ancient Indian epics, the "Mahabharata" and the "Ramayana" (from the first to the third centuries A.D.).

Breasts, buttocks and thighs—the primary erogenous zones—predictably featured large in these descriptions.

But a slim waist trumped them all.

'As little as a wand'

In English literature, a glowing description of a narrow waist (a waist "as little as a wand," "beholden to her lovely waist," and so on) showed up 65 times.

That compared to 16 references for romantic description of breasts, 12 for thighs and a mere two apiece for hips and buttocks.

Before anyone cries fattism, the literature was studded with romantic tributes to plumpness but relatively few to slimness.

But what counted, plump woman or slim, was the relative narrowness of the waist. There was not a single evocation of beauty that said the object of veneration had a bulging tummy.

In the Asian works, the slim waist was even more adored, although there was no flattering reference to plump beauty.

Narrow-waistedness scored a massive 35 references in the two Indian epics, while the other body parts garnered a total of 26.

In the Chinese poetry, the narrow waist was evoked 17 times, while breasts, buttocks, hips and thighs got zero, and there was a solitary romantic reference to a woman's legs.

Object of desire

The study, which appears in Proceedings of the Royal Society B, a British journal, says these references show that a slim waist is an object of desire that spans time and cultures.

Why so?

The answer, suggest the authors Devendra Singh, Peter Renn and Adrian Singh, is that a narrow waist is a sign of strong health and fertility. Men instinctively assess a woman's waist for its potential for successful reproduction and thus furthering their own genes.

Modern research has established a link between abdominal obesity and decreased estrogen, reduced fecundity and increased risk of major diseases.

But "even without the benefit of modern medical knowledge, both British and Asian writers intuited the biological link between health and beauty," the authors say.

"In spite of variation in the description of beauty, the marker of health and fertility—a small waist—has always been an invariant symbol of feminine beauty," they say. *AFP*

German cops track down 322 men hooked to child porn site in RP

From page A1

Interior Minister Holger Hoevelmann of the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, where the investigation began, told a news conference in Magdeburg west of Berlin that the 14 credit card companies had screened transactions of all 22 million credit card holders in Germany to track down the 322 suspects.

The suspects all paid 79.99 euros (US$104.04 at Tuesday's exchange rate) for 20-day access to a suspicious foreign account last summer.

"We're grateful to the credit card firms that provided their assistance and found the 322 cases themselves," Hoevelmann said.

"As far as data protection regulations are concerned, everything was done according to [Germany's strict privacy laws]," he said.

Biggest in German history

It was the biggest credit card screening in German history.

Authorities said the credit card companies had voluntarily cooperated with the investigation they code-named "Mikado." Hoevelmann said the raid would serve as a warning.

"Potential criminals should be aware: We'll catch them all," he said.

Hoevelmann said most of the suspects, tracked down in all 16 German states, had admitted to the crime. They were mostly single men with good jobs, and included four convicted child abusers and several repeat offenders for child pornography.

In their raids, police confiscated evidence such as printouts of photographs and computers with several thousand data carriers containing child pornography.

4th in Asia

The suspects will be charged and face anything from a fine to up to two years in jail, depending on any previous convictions.

An INQUIRER report dated June 30, 2006, quoted Chief Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, deputy director of the Philippine National Police directorate for investigation and detective management, as saying that the Philippines ranked fourth among "child prostitution centers" in Asia.

Only Thailand, Cambodia and Burma (Myanmar) fared worse, he told a regional conference against child pornography held in Manila.

Mendoza said the proliferation of the Internet and digital technology had paved the way for the rapid growth of child pornography in the country.

He said local cyber syndicates, victimizing mostly children aged 10 and below, could earn at least $1 billion a year.

At the same conference, Anjanette Saguisag, project officer of the child protection section of the local United Nations Children's Fund, said there was "generally a lack of awareness of the problem of child pornography" in the Philippines.

"As far as law enforcement is concerned, we still don't see a lot happening because many are still not aware of the problem," she said.

According to Mendoza, the lack of comprehensive legislation on child pornography "greatly undermines the seriousness and importance" of the issue and "limits the role of police operations against the perpetrators." *Reuters and AP, with an Inquirer report*

Defensor's platform: Erap's release

By Gil Cabacungan

PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF Michael Defensor is making the temporary release of jailed President Joseph Estrada the focal point of his campaign for a senatorial seat this May.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Defensor stressed that giving Estrada "momentary freedom" through recognizance had been a personal stand which he had espoused in the Arroyo Cabinet over the past two years.

"There are plenty religious leaders willing to act as guarantor for Estrada's temporary liberty and I believe that this is the right thing to do in the case of our former President. It's about time we start to heal the wounds," said Defensor who did not identify the religious leaders.

Recognizance allows a jailed individual to be released without bail under the care of someone with high moral standing in the community.

Just like in the past when he broached the idea of recognizance for Estrada, Defensor said he expected some members of the administration to continue opposing this.

"I'm convinced that this is the right thing to do which is why I am making this one of my campaign platforms," said Defensor the only Cabinet Secretary that has so far declared his intention to run in senatorial elections in May.

Defensor is one of the few Arroyo confidantes who continue to have direct access to Estrada. Because of this, the former Quezon City congressman has acted as the go-between for the Palace and the former president in the past six years.

Eastrada has listed his temporary release as one of his conditions before starting the process of reconciliation with the forces that toppled him in Edsa II in 2001.

Defensor said he does not care when this will happen, as long as it is soon.

Estrada has helped a lot of senators to get into their positions, Defensor said, and he is wondering why they have not made this move.

In Malacanang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the administration will field winnable candidates for the Senate and the House in the May polls so it can thwart any new attempt by the opposition to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo.

'We'll just have to first choose the correct candidates for the Senate and (who are) supportive of the President, especially in the House of Representatives, so that in the eventuality that anybody would wish to make a move on another impeachment, then we are assured that it will not progress because we have more allies in the House and in the Upper House," Ermita said at his weekly Palace briefing.

Not worried

Malacañang had successfully blocked attempts by the opposition in the last two years to impeach President Arroyo, thanks largely to the Arroyo-dominated House which prevented the impeachment case from reaching the Senate, many members of whom are hostile to the President.

But Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said that getting winnable bets for Congress for the purpose of blocking any new impeachment bid was just "secondary" to its main objective.

Claudio said the administration was not worried at all about a new impeachment bid this year.

"We're not worried at all ... we will make sure that there are less members of Congress who will be in support of such impeachment bid," Claudio said in a phone interview.

In last year's impeachment bid against the President, the opposition was able to get the support of only 32 lawmakers, way below the 2/3 required to send the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate.

Claudio said that 70 percent of incumbents in Congress are running for reelection while the rest will be nominated by incumbents who will also be campaigning for them.

"And it is the same might and machinery that will carry the senatorial ticket to victory," he said. *With reports from Christine Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac*

Seafood resto faces P10-M fine for defying DENR

By Norman Bordadora

THE OWNER OF A seafood restaurant that allegedly defied a government closure order for allegedly polluting the Manila Bay may end up behind bars for up to 10 years and paying up to P10 million, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said yesterday.

Closed

The Seafood Seaside Market on Roxas Boulevard in Parañaque City was ordered closed in October 2006 for allegedly discharging untreated waste water into the bay.

It was then found during a random check in November to have removed the government-installed padlocks in the establishment and the seal on its central water valve.

'Reprehensible'

"During the deliberations on the case, the (Pollution Adjudication Board of the DENR) was exasperated by the respondents' reprehensible act of removing the padlocks and seals placed without prior approval from the DENR secretary," the board said in its order.

On Tuesday, the National Anti-Environment Crime Task Force and the Environmental Management Bureau in Metro Manila implemented the board order again, placing locks and resealing the water system.

Illegally open

The PAB said that unless the restaurant owners are able to explain satisfactorily why they defied the earlier cease-and-desist order, they will face fines of up to P200,000 a day starting from Nov. 17 when the establishment was found to have removed the locks and seal until they were replaced on Tuesday.

The DENR's computation showed that the restaurant stands to pay a total of P10.6 million for the 53 days it was illegally open.

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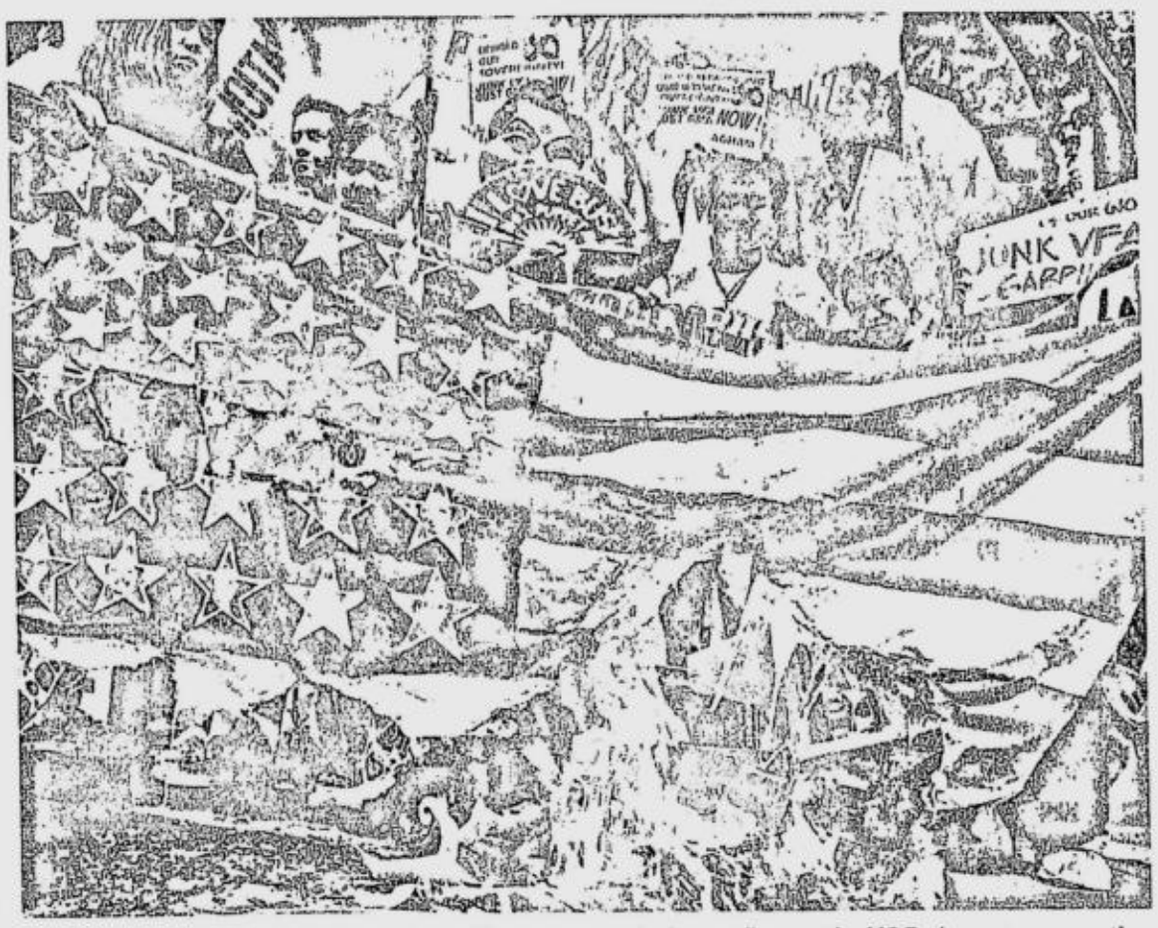
SECURITY FORCES in full battle gear guard Cebu's international airport on Wednesday as delegates to the 12th Asean summit start arriving for ministerial meetings in the run-up to the summit of Asean leaders and their Asian dialogue partners on Jan.13-15. AFP



UP IN FLAMES: An American flag is burned by protesters during a rally near the US Embassy to oppose the announced resumption of the Balikatan war games, the joint RP-US military exercise which was reinstated after US Marine Cpl. Daniel Smith convicted of raping "Nicole" was transferred to the embassy's custody. AP

AFP goes on nationwide red alert

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE Philippines announced yesterday it had gone on nationwide red alert as of 8 a.m. for the duration of the weeklong 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. flew to Cebu City on Tuesday, the eve of the summit's opening, to inspect the military's security preparations.

"The Chief of Staff was satisfied with the security preparations. It's all systems go. Our preparations are sufficient to foil any threat," AFP public information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters.

Esperon said the about 7,500 troops deployed in Sulu since August would keep Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah militants "on the run" to prevent them from escaping from the island province and staging bomb attacks in urban centers.

'No definite threat'

Within the past week, troops reported that they had killed seven bandits, including three Abu Sayyaf sub-commanders and a Jemaah Islamiyah member, in Tawi-Tawi and in Sulu.

"Threat groups should be kept on the run to prevent them from staging any terror activity here in Cebu," said Esperon, as quoted by Bacarro.

Bacarro reiterated the military's official line that there was "no definite threat" of terror attacks on the ASEAN summit but the AFP went ahead with its full alert status as a precaution.

The military has deployed about 5,500 soldiers to assist about 7,000 policemen in securing the annual leaders meeting, that was postponed in early December supposedly due to typhoon threat.

Asean likely to endorse landmark antiterror pact

From page A1

gence Group, said the PNP and military had launched operations against militants throughout the archipelago to prevent them from carrying out attacks.

Leaders of 16 Asian nations are expected to adopt a legally binding Convention on Counterterrorism.

Cross-border cooperation

A draft convention urges participants to improve cross-border cooperation to prevent attacks, share intelligence and training, curb terror financing and rehabilitate convicted terrorists to prevent repeat attacks.

The summit also is expected to endorse energy security goals for the region that seeks to reduce its dependency on oil imports, as well as discuss recommendations for the radical changes in a long-overdue Asean charter.

Changes may include an easing of a fundamental Asean policy—which forbids member countries from interfering in each other's domestic affairs—to allow sanctions when members fail to comply with the group's edicts.

Malacañang confirmed the attendance of all the Asean heads of state, except Burma (Myanmar), in the summit plus the leaders of its dialogue partners from Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.

'Caring, sharing community'

In a televised forum at the Palace, Ms Arroyo said:

"We face a great future in East Asia as a caring and sharing community and this meeting of leaders will be another golden opportunity to carve out new directions of development across borders, fighting poverty and building coalitions of technology.

"We stand at the threshold of great challenges and opportunities and timely discussions will enable Asean and East Asia to seize the moment and the momentum to achieve broader human security, peace and prosperity at the grass root of every village and community."

The President also underscored the country's goal of steering the group to a successful summit.

'All for one and one for all'

"The Philippines is determined to exercise its leadership toward this noble end and the Filipino people are determined to play their role as good regional and global citizens to spread the message of goodwill, cooperation and consensus for the benefit of all. All roads lead to Cebu; all for one and one for all," she said. *With a report from AP*

BLOCKING FORCE: The civil disturbance management unit redeployed from Iloilo to the Cebu convention center will be utilized as a blocking force against ralliers who'll attempt to gatecrash. REM ZAMORA

RP offers to host talks on N. Korea

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—THE PHILIPPINES has yet to pass the test as host of 12th Asean Summit here, but it has already offered to host an "informal" version of the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear buildup.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday said Manila is proposing a "Track Two" approach to addressing the security concerns over Northeast Asia.

Track Two diplomacy generally refers to the opening of unofficial channels when official communications between countries or between a government and an insurgent group have broken down.

Such venues often involve private citizens versed in conflict-resolution processes and are aimed at easing tensions, correcting misperceptions and unfounded fears between peoples, before the same breakthroughs can be achieved at the official level.

As this year's Asean chair, the Philippines has a standing offer to host the next round of negotiations among North and South Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the United States on North Korea's nuclear development program and the global security threat it has posed.

"In the spirit of that (earlier) offer, the Philippines will call for the holding and will offer to host a Track Two, informal gathering of the countries involved in the Six-Party talks," Romulo said in a statement.

The announcement was made ahead of the Asean Summit proper and the larger 2nd East Asia Summit from Jan. 13 to 15, all involving heads of state of the 10 Asean members and their six dialogue partners.

On Tuesday, the Philippines resumed the ministerial meetings leading to the Summit that were abruptly cut short last month.

Officials then maintained that an approaching typhoon prompted the postponement, amid speculations that the decision was really due to travel advisories issued by several Western countries, including the United States, warning that a terrorist plot was set to disrupt the summit.

Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom have retained the advisories they issued last month, urging their citizens to avoid travel to Cebu.

Asean fails to reach consensus on migrant pact

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—ASEAN MEMBERS failed to reach a consensus last night on whether a proposed agreement calling for stronger protection and improved conditions for migrant workers should also cover family members living with them in the employing country.

Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos, who represented the Philippines in the talks, said some members of the 10-nation bloc had expressed reservations over the mention of "families" in the draft document.

The Cebu Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant workers is one of the major documents expected to be signed in the 12th Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations here this week.

"They just don't want to get the impression across that they are welcoming families because, under their domestic laws, when you say 'migrant workers,' it's the workers and not the family," Conejos told reporters upon emerging from yesterday's meeting of Asean senior officials.

"On the other hand," he said, "it was articulated there are instances when, for example, domestic workers abroad gets married or raises a family there."

Such scenarios are possible even if the workers originally had "no intention of bringing their families with them," he noted. "So, shall we separate them?" he said, citing the "argument's pro and con" that were raised during the discussion.

But Conejos expressed confidence that the issue was just a "matter of terminology" and was not serious enough to hold back the signing of the declaration.

Line-by-line changes

The officials were reduced to arguing over line-by-line changes to the statement yesterday, with nations at odds over extending rights to the families of immigrant workers, one official said.

"The whole issue of migrant labor in Southeast Asia is a minefield of problems," the official, who did not want to be named, told AFP.

He said Indonesian insistence on including "migrant workers and their families" was being strongly resisted by Singapore and Malaysia, two of the region's biggest recipients of migrant labor.

Economic success

Human rights and labor groups around the region have called on Asean to improve the pay and conditions of migrant workers, many of whom are exploited and paid low wages.

William Gois, regional coordinator for Migrant Forum in Asia, said migrant workers were the "backbone" of the region's economic success but at the same time were treated miserably.

"The problem for Asean is to come up with a document that will be taken seriously and incorporate labor standards including freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, and eliminate all forms of discrimination at the workplace," he said.

"Asean should also recognize that its people are not tradable commodities."

Indonesia, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar) and Vietnam are the region's main suppliers of labor, providing skilled and unskilled workers, while Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Thailand are among the major recipients.

Migrant workers

Gois said no one knows how many legal and illegal migrant workers there are in Southeast Asia but said it was "reasonable to assume that the figure would be many millions."

He added: "Countries like Singapore and Malaysia are heavily dependent on migrant labor. Without them their economies would face serious problems."

He said the number of undocumented migrant workers in Malaysia from Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma (Myanmar) probably topped 200,000.

"Nearly all those working on Malaysia's rubber plantations are migrant workers, while countries like Singapore seek out skilled technical people," he said.

Gois said Asean should recognize the contributions made by millions of migrant workers to the economies of its members. *AFP*

US Navy ship's presence off Mactan island stirs talk

From page A1

"It's a normal port call," Navforcen commander Commodore Roberto Estioko said. He said the ship was in Cebu to conduct hydrographic and geodetic survey.

The US Military Sealift Command website described the USS John McDonnell as an "oceanographic survey" vessel which examined the Indonesian waters following the deadly tsunami in December 2004.

Parts of sea off limits

Also yesterday, the Coast Guard declared some portions of the seawaters along the summit venues off limits to the public beginning today until Monday.

Commodore Alejandro Flora said as part of security measures the Coast Guard was implementing a 1,000-yard exclusion zone, covering the waters fronting Cebu Hilton Resort and Spa, Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa and Plantation Bay Resort.

Half of the Hilutungan Channel is also closed to sea traffic, with vessels advised to use only the eastern part of the channel, at least 2,000 yards away from Mactan Island.

The Coast Guard, in a press statement, said they would apprehend all unregistered boats plying Mactan and Hilutungan channels.

Some militant groups have announced plans to hold protest action in the Mactan Channel, including a swim and fluvial parade on Sunday.

Flora, however, said the Navy and Coast Guard vessels patrolling the restricted areas would block the militant groups.

Protests

About 30 farmers and fishermen belonging to Pamana-Sugbo and the Kilusan ng Mga Magbubukid ng Pilipinas staged a rally outside the Malacañang sa Sugbo yesterday.

Members of the Pamana-Sugbo and the Kilusan ng mga Magbubukid ng Pilipinas brought with them fish and vegetables and threw them at the gate of the presidential residence in Cebu City.

"That symbolized how we felt about the way the government is treating us. The government instead, of protecting our products, protected the products from other countries," said spokesperson Victor Lapaz said.

Manero, priest killer, seeks release

CONVICTED PRIEST KILLER Norberto Manero Jr. yesterday appealed to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for his release, citing good conduct and claiming that he had served his sentence.

Gonzalez, who visited the medium security compound of the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City yesterday, promised to look into his appeal.

Jailed along with his two brothers for the killing of Italian priest Tulio Favali in 1985, Manero aired his plea during a dialogue between officials of the Bureau of Correction (BuCor) and Department of Justice (DOJ) headed by Gonzalez and selected prisoners, which included Calauan, Laguna Mayor Antonio Sanchez, who is serving life sentence for rape and murder, and former Mindoro congressman Jose Villarosa, who was convicted of murder.

Manero told Gonzalez that there was no more legal impediment for his release considering that the Sarangani Regional Trial Court Branch 38 had dismissed on April 15, 2002 the complaint of kidnapping with double murder filed against him in 2000.

Manero also showed a certification from Sarangani RTC Branch 38 Clerk of Court Anthony Barluado saying that there was no more pending criminal or civil case against him.

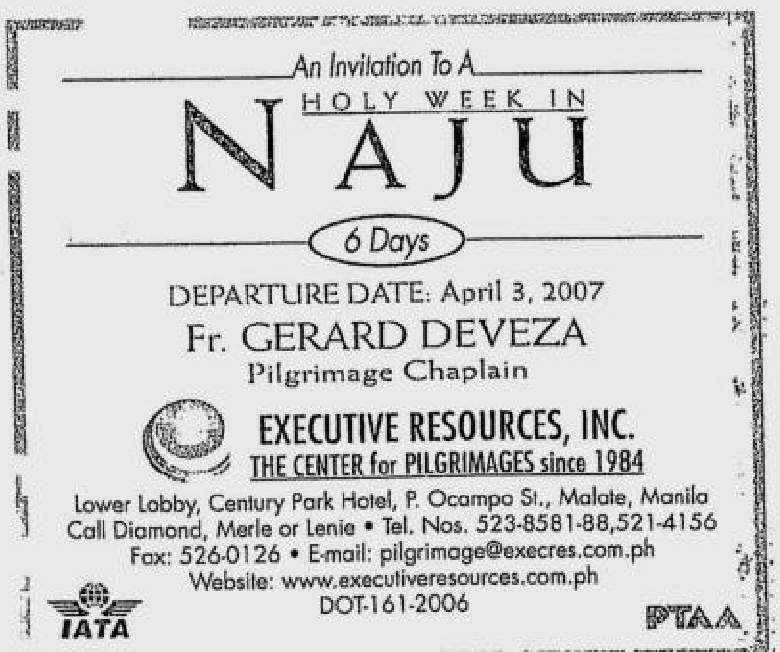
"I don't understand why they are still detaining me. I had already served my sentence and the Sarangani Court had already dismissed the kidnapping with double murder case filed against me. I should have been freed already," Manero told Gonzalez.

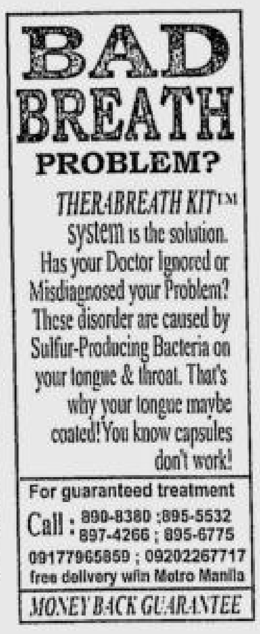
Gonzalez assured Manero that he would look into his claim as well as the cases of other prisoners who are similarly situated.

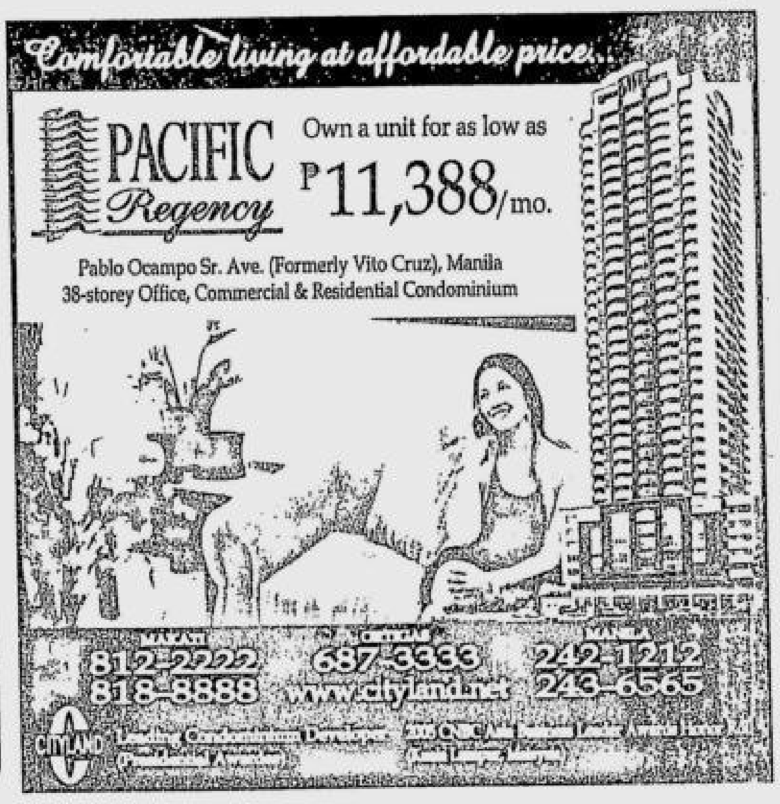
Gonzalez also met with former Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, who was convicted of statutory rape.

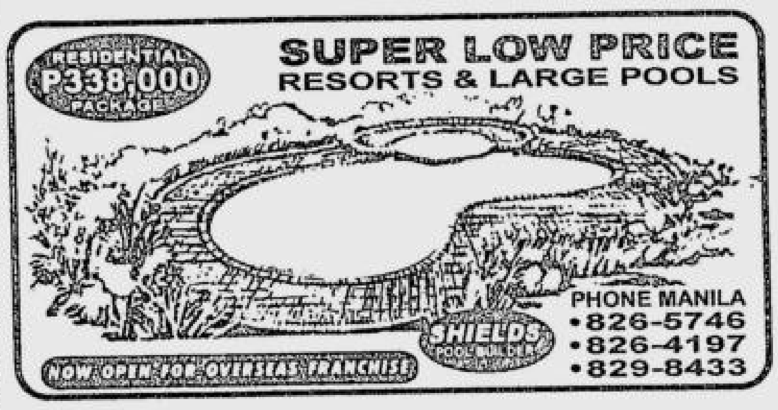
Manero's wife Evelyn had appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to grant executive clemency to her husband who has been in prison for more than 27 years.

In a letter to the President dated Dec. 13, 2006, Evelyn said her husband was already qualified to live and mingle with the people as certified by Dr. Oscar Castillo, of the BuCor Reception and Diagnostic Center. *Norman Bordadora*



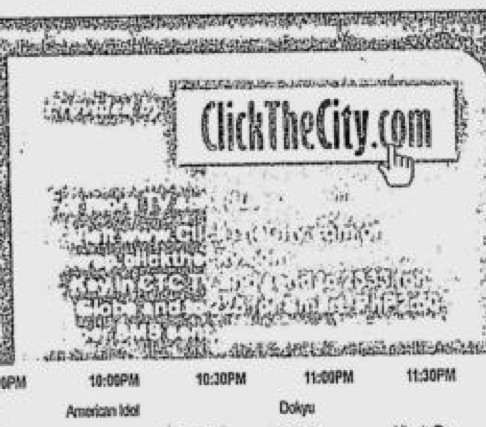






INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Thursday, January 11, 2007



Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Nickelodeon				TNA Wrestling		Metro		Big News	S.O.S		Hayop Na Hayop		Wow Maling-Mali Bytes	Sentro	American Idol		Dokyu	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Inocente Da Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Bad The Vandal Buster	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Super Inggo (8:15 PM)		Maging Sino Ka Man	Princess Hours		Bandila	SOCO	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		CSI: Miami (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		Sports Disaster IV		Ripley's Believe It or Not		The 4400 (Season 2)		Fear Factor (Season V)		The Amazing Race Asia		Alias (Season V)		Lost (Season II)	
bTV		B-ballography: B. Pelt	NBA Action	NBA Raptors @ Bucks					NCAA Men's Basketball Teams TBD				NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA Raptors @ Bucks				
Cinemax			Walking Tall 3: The Final Chapter				Dog Park			The Bad News Bears				Tales From The Crypt: Demon Knight				Murder 101	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	News Asia Global Challenges Inside Middle East CNN Bus Traveller Global Office Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Revelations		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit + 24		Profiler		Investigative Reports		Law and Order		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit + 24		Bones		Threshold		E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		Asian Enigma		Man Made Marvels		Best of Discovery 2006				Extreme Engineering		The Greatest Ever		Mythbusters		Man Made Marvels		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Shuriken School	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Monster Allergy	Shuriken School	Buzz On Maggie	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		ESPN Great Outdoor Games				Cheerleading	Dakar Rally '07 Euronews	Atlantic Coast Conf: Duke Vs Georgia Tech				2006 WPBA Florida Classic		Sportscenter Asia	NBA Fastbreak	Motorsport Asia	2006 World Cup Of Trick Shots		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Beach Girls		Knock First	Seinfeld	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Change of Heart	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace	Friends	Simple Life 4	Rated Oh	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen (Degeneres) Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Nanny 911		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Makita Ka Lang Muli	Kapuso Movie Festival				Ghost Fighter	Jewel In The Palace		24 Oras	Captain Barbell	Atlantika	StarStruck: The Next Level	Bakekang	A Rosy Life (9:15 PM)		Magpakailanman		Saksi	100% Pinoy
Hallmark Channel		Missing						Mcleod's Daughters VI		Family Law III		ER I		Spooks		Wire In The Blood		Wire In The Blood	
HBO			HBO Central In January	Falling In Love			Around The Bend (5:45 PM)			Lords Of Dogtown				Twelve Monkeys				Bophal	
Hero TV	Cromartie High/ Animenutes	Megaman	Susie And Marvy	Mirmo de Pon	Monkey Turn	Naruto	SD Gundam Force	Gundam Seed Destiny	Zoid Genesis	Voltes V Evolution	Inuyasha III	Mirmo de Pon	Mirmo de Pon	Cromartie High/ Animenutes	Astroboy	Naruto	AmDriver	Megaman	Yu-Gi-Oh GX
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		EBC Earth Files		Japan Video Topics		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite		
JackTV		Paid Programming		WWE Smackdown				Experience		Mad TV		King Of The Hill	American Dad	Everybody Hates Chris	That 70s Show	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	South Park
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	Wolfgang Puck	Inside Dish	Rachel Ray		Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Martha		Look For Less	Good Finds	Rachel Ray		E! True Hollywood Story		Your Private Island	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	MTV Music Remedy	Laguna Beach	MTV Spanner! Meet MTV Feel The Music	MTV Ampuh		Real World: Key West	Real World: Key West	POP INC		MTV Live Muse	My Own	Sorority Life	Fraternity Life	Laguna Beach	Boiling Points Local Ep.	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Footballer's Cribs	MTV Cribs
MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Presents		MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Backtrax	MYXilog
National Geographic	Monkey Business	Megastructures: Megafactories (Ferrari)		Naked Science: Shark Attacks		Amazing Moments: Most Extreme Moments		Top 5 - MegaCities: Mexico City		National Geographic Specials		WOW! Giant Panda		Megastructures: Megafactories (Abrams Tank)		Naked Science: Alien Contact		Amazing Moments	
NBN					Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig Ng Bayan		Equilibrium		Teledyaryo Final Edition		World Pool Championship					
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	In Focus	Euromaxx	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		OpenLine Live	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Pagbubunyag		World Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal News	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Danny Phantom	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Dark Oracle	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Romeo	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
Qtv	Pawnshop No. 8	Samurai X	Hikaru No Go	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Sad Love Song	Inna		Emperor Of The Sea	Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Value Added Treasures
RPN 9	TV Shopping	Dad's Day		Roundtable Discussion	Mr. Fighting	RPN Aksyon Balita		Complete Savages	Jake In Progress	The 4400		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now	P-Max	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports						Spanish League: At Madrid vs Gimnastic				WPT Tour Hollywood Home				Hoop Nation		Sportsdesk	Hoop Nation		Sportsdesk
Star Movies		The Mighty Ducks (3:15 PM)				Enemy Of The State				Hatfields (7:10 PM)				Racing Stripes			Star Wars: Episode II: Attack Of The Clones		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful	General Hospital		Dinner Table For Three		Arrested Development	The Simpsons	Friends	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Hope & Faith	According To Jim	The Office	Two And A Half Men	Dinner Table For Three		Seinfeld	Hope & Faith
Studio 23								Barkada Log		Wazzup Wazzup	Totally Outrageous Behavior	Two And A Half Men	Will & Grace	Grey's Anatomy		News Central	Oprah		MYX
UnTV				KNC Show	Kakampi Mo Ang Batas		Koka at Ciska Kaagapay Nyo		Public Hearing	Make My Day		Ang Dating Daan (8:15 PM)							

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OPINION

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Summit issues

EDITORIAL

THE SUMMIT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF Southeast Asian Nations in Cebu City comes at a most auspicious time for the region. The US invasion and occupation of Iraq have proved to be most problematic not only for the occupier and the occupied, but also for the world. Its immediate impact on the world is to raise the stakes for the problem that this adventurist move sought to stamp out in the first place: terrorism.

Rightly or wrongly, American adventurism in Iraq has been seen as nothing but US capitalism waging war on an Islamic state that has rich oil resources. Ostensibly the war was waged against Saddam Hussein to stop him from producing "weapons of mass destruction." The latter reason has proved to be a sham, reinforcing the belief that the war was nothing but capitalist greed masquerading as altruism. Moreover, Saddam has already been hanged for crimes against humanity, leaving the United States with no more scapegoat to justify its occupation of Iraq. The adventure has now become a tinderbox threatening to explode and the world is forced to absorb the thunderous wrath of Islamic fundamentalism, which is the driving force of the world terrorist movement.

The terrorist threat is uppermost in the minds of Asean leaders and their dialogue partners. Host Philippines has sought to assure and reassure the Asean heads of state and other leaders that the site of the summit is secure. It has suffered the humiliation of making those assurances because of the threat. Last month when the summit was postponed, there was suspicion that the real reason was not the threat of a typhoon blowing over Central Philippines but a terrorist threat that refused to die down.

No less than the economic minister of Japan had criticized the Philippines for postponing the summit and minced no words in proclaiming the typhoon to be a mere alibi. He insinuated that the real reason was the terrorist threat. The Japanese official's candor was uncharacteristic and the manner in which the remarks were published—through the web log or "blog," a very democratic, free-market form of dissemination—seemed calculated to embarrass Manila.

But Manila held on to its guns, and suffered the humiliation in silence. The Philippines' comportment through the ordeal was well-taken internationally. After all, it was not Manila's fault that the Philippines was typhoon-prone. Moreover, the Philippines had merely accepted the burden of hosting the summit after Burma, which was supposed to host it, had turned off a lot of Asean leaders and partners for its controversial human rights record.

Threat or no threat, the fact that the Asean leaders and partners are attending the summit is a vote of confidence in the Philippines and a reaffirmation of the international partnership against terrorism. The summit is expected to be capped by the signing of the Convention on Counterterrorism to prevent and help investigate attacks by terrorists in the region.

Another mordant security threat is the nuclear ambition of North Korea. Since Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao is attending the summit as a dialogue partner of the Asean, Southeast Asian leaders could press him to join more wholeheartedly in the international effort to stem Pyongyang's nuclear plans. The Asean leaders could also encourage on another Asean dialogue partner, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, to repair Japan's relations with China and South Korea so that together, they could form a working partnership to encourage Pyongyang to adopt a less confrontational stance.

But the Burma question is uppermost in the minds of the Asean leaders, who have resolved to draft an Asean Charter, which will allow the association to sanction erring members, including those with repressive and dictatorial tendencies and records.

All of the above however are really fringe issues in the Asean, which is an economic partnership. The central issue that the summit must address is Asean's fading luster as an investment site because it is losing out to China, the darling of international investors. The only way to resolve that is to brave the road to European Union-style communion. Asean leaders have in fact targeted zero tariffs for the original six Asean members by 2010, and a single economic union to include late-coming members by 2015. The latter target will not only include goods but services as well, including big winners of the Asean such as tourism and health.

The resolution of these economic and political issues as well as security issues should make the Cebu summit not only productive, but historic as well.

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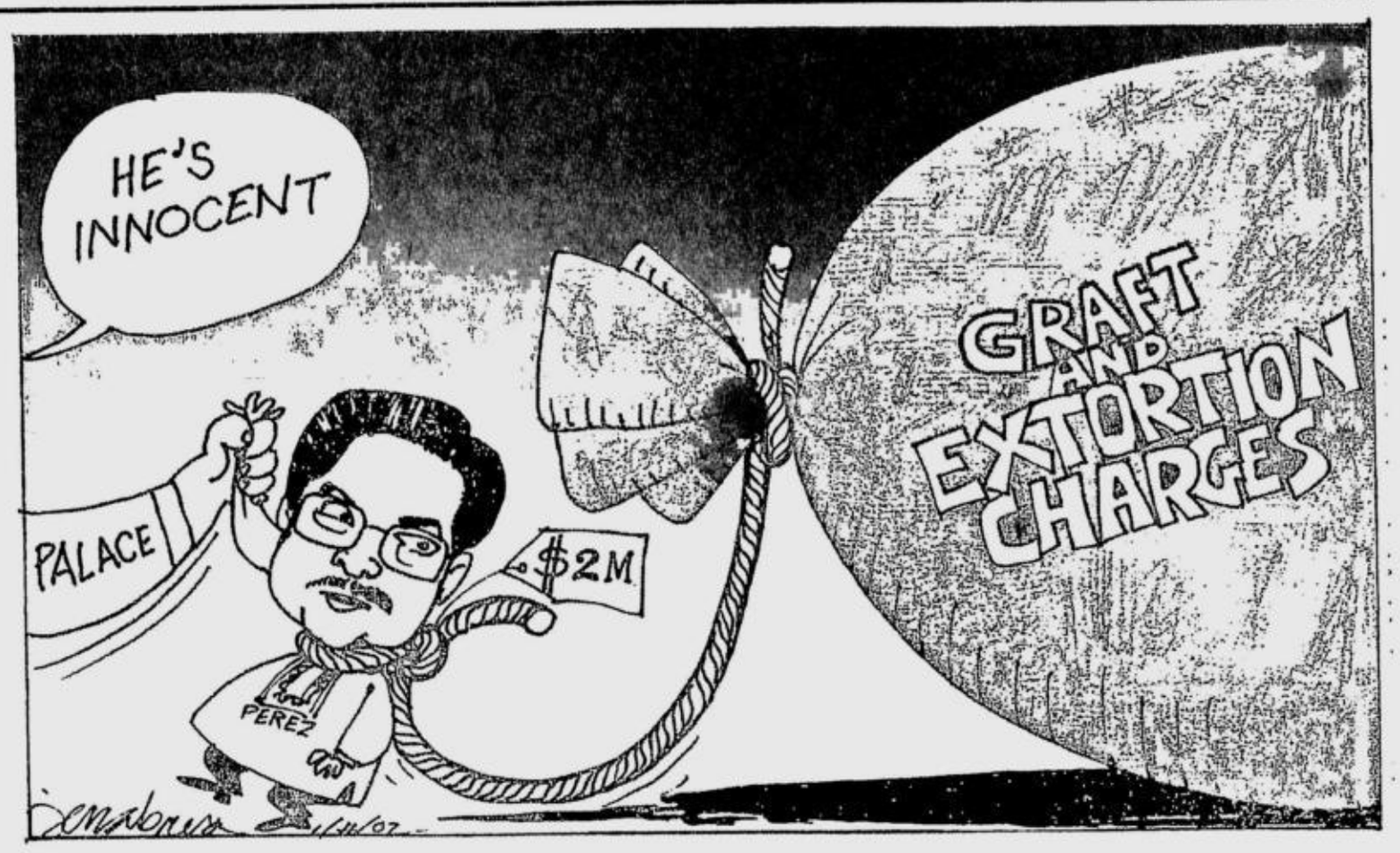


Turpitude's depths

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DELEGATES TO THE 12TH ASEAN MEETING need not ask why, in the counterterrorism chain they're cobbling, our armed forces may be a weaker link. Filipina journalists have given an answer that impacts on southern Philippine "sanctuaries of terror" and regional security.

In an investigative report published by the INQUIRER, Yvonne Chua and Luz Rimban document how a culture of sleaze, over the years, whittled down the Armed Forces of the Philippines into the wimp of Asean armed forces today. After tenacious research and interviews, they stitched fragmented information about the AFP into a cohesive whole. The result reveals, in Juvenal's phrase: *fuit turpissimus* (the depths of turpitude). How else do you call dissipating P11 billion in office supplies, entertainment, etc. through rigged bids and favored suppliers? Foot soldiers, meanwhile, lack food, guns, boots, radio—even as their retirement funds have been looted. "Money can hide a thousand deformities."

The President is commander in chief. And Congress postures as guardian of the purse. But military reforms have stalled. "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodies?*" Who watches the watchmen? In a democracy, the citizen and the press do.

In three concise articles, Chua and Rimban exercised more oversight over the AFP than Congress ever managed. They pinpointed blots and glitches—from bogged-down Scorpion tanks to underhanded cuts in allowances of Filipinos serving as UN peacekeepers.

Their accuracy, balance and sense of the relevant jacks up the standards for investigative reporting—a "critical component of the democratic discourse," as the Magsaysay 2003 Journalism award for Sheila Coronel puts it. They focused on glossed-over issues and asked tough questions.

Theirs was grueling work. At the Marcelo Fernan Cebu Press Center, Chua and I swapped notes on "following the smell of money" in Commission on Audit reports. Chua and Rimban honed this skill at the PCIJ. Their articles skewered independent power plants and Joseph Estrada's mansions for concubines. "You're likely to find the story buried in the annexes, not in the main report," Chua mused. In Cebu, bloated foreign debts for Mayor Tomas Osmeña's reclamation project and the airport's Bell 412 EP helicopter were first stashed in COA annexes.

By example, the Chua-Rimban series spurns "pack-reporting." In the justice department, a *ponente* scribbles a bland release for others on the beat to embroider, says the Philippine Journalism Review. That malpractice is cloned in other beats. Thus, few challenge the official line. "Pack reporting is insidiously convenient, with its comforting blanket of conformity .... Truth-telling is the loneliest of businesses."

The deeper significance of the INQUIRER series is seen in the scholars' insistence that the Asean address more forcefully the seepage of terrorists across porous borders, whether in southern Thailand or Mindanao, "as a radical minority and a moderate majority battle for the soul of Islam."

A weak state, the Philippines is at peace with its neighbors, note Kit Collier of Australian National University and Malcolm Cook of Lowry Institute for International Policy. "But since 1994, its lawless southern islands replaced Afghanistan as the main training ground and refuge for Southeast Asian jihadists. Most are Indonesians belonging to Jemaah Islamiyah, Mujahidin Kompak, Darul Islam and other factions. Mindanao could well become "the Philippines' sanctuaries of terror."

Singapore's International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research estimates that JI has 100 foreign militants hiding in Mindanao alone. "The graduates of the Mindanao camps have taken part in every JI-linked bombings since 2000, including the attack on Bali in 2002."

Another Filipina journalist offered one of the more perceptive analyses of this threat before 23 countries attending the Pacific Area Special Operations Conference. It's a myth to think that today's borders and nations can contain these new conflicts as they did in the past, former CNN bureau chief Maria Ressa cautioned.

"When you're talking about conflicts involving Muslim issues, there are no local conflicts," says Ressa, who now heads the ABS-CBN news and current affairs office. Post 9/11 assumptions no longer hold in a struggle where language and culture have become weapons. "No one dominant culture or power can dictate the terms" in what will be a drawn-out ideological and armed campaign. Denial, as well as petty intra-country squabbles like failing to share information, can impose high costs.

"The front line in this war is within the Muslim world," she adds. It is "a battle for the soul of Islam: between a radical minority and a moderate majority .... Language, culture and religion will play crucial roles in convincing Muslims .... in defining Islam's future.

Asean member countries must adopt multipronged responses—from law to education. Malaysia, for example, monitors its ulama. A Singapore study shows the Philippines could have staved off 60 percent of terrorist attacks "if we had an anti-terror law." Improved military and law enforcement "cuts down the space for terrorists to operate."

A coup-tainted AFP needs to be professionalized and reoriented to defense, border security and special operations, Collier and Cook stress. A better-equipped AFP can "close down any remaining terrorist sanctuaries—and keep them closed." And that's what Chua and Rimban's and Ressa's reports are about.

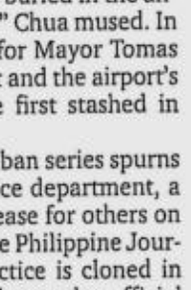
* * *

E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com

Warming signs, warning signs

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



YOU THINK LAST YEAR PRODUCED STORMS that could never possibly come this way again? Think again. This year could bring worse.

Stronger storms in Asia, floods in Latin America and harsher droughts in Australia and Africa: that is the prediction of scientists as a resurgent El Niño and La Niña combined stalk the length and breadth of the planet this year. 2007 could possibly be the hottest year ever in recorded history.

Raphael Satter of AP writes: "The warmest year on record is 1998, when the average global temperature was 1.2 degrees Fahrenheit higher than the long-term average of 57 degrees. Though such a change appears small, incremental differences can, for example, add to the ferocity of storms by evaporating more steam off the ocean.

"There is a 60 percent chance that the average global temperature for 2007 will match or break the record .... The consequences of the high temperatures could be felt worldwide. El Niño, which is now under way in the Pacific Ocean and is expected to last until May, occurs irregularly. But when it does ... Pacific storms can be more intense."

Even as we preoccupy ourselves with the burning events in this country, events that affect us immediately and powerfully, let us spare a thought for the cataclysmic, even if seemingly slow-acting, events in this planet, events that could mean the end of all life as we know it. I don't know that it's completely whimsical to think about it as the point where Science and the Bible meet; but unless humankind rouses itself up to the peril, we could be facing an Apocalypse in the not very distant future—if not in our lifetime, at least in that of our children. The Bible identifies damnation as hellfire, Science identifies damnation as global warming. It's a tossup which one is hotter.

You can't have a more life-and-death issue than that. Which is how I've become an ardent espouser of the environmental cause lately.

A couple of years ago, I used to tell the environmental groups that came to ask me how to press their cause better before the public to find a way to make it a matter of life and death. My problem with the "green" advocacy, I said—at least as it has been pitched in this country—was that it radiated a strong aspect of tree-hugging. It seemed more like a luxury that bejeweled matrons who had little better to do indulged in, encouraged no end by their executive husbands for many reasons, the least being to find tax shelters and the most being to find time for their secretaries.

Saving the trees and clean air, among others, were what we associated the green cause with. Both, of course, had a glimmer of urgency in them, but only a glimmer. The environmental groups could always argue that the disappearance of the country's forests posed the direst threats to this country, some of which had already turned into a frightening reality, and that tolerating the levels of smog in Metro Manila in particular was committing slow-motion suicide. But given that they paled in comparison with direr threats to life, like hunger—I remember from my youth that we activists justified our chain-smoking by saying that, before cigarettes, a lot of things were bound to kill us first—they always stood to be drowned by other seemingly more pressing issues.

A footnote to this is that a lot of things did fell friends before cigarettes could work their poison in their system. But many of them did also die from cancer, which probably came from a combination of cigarettes and a stressful life.

December 2004 changed all that. A couple of things during that month drove home the point about the green cause being a matter of life and death, which truly should shove Greenpeace and the other environmental groups into the limelight in this country today. Those two events were the fierce storm that brought the treeless hills of Infanta tumbling to the ground, burying hundreds of folk below in a muddy grave; and the tsunami that wiped out an entire village in Aceh and ravaged neighboring islands.

Suddenly, green turned to red, as in blood. I would learn later that that year broke whole new records in ecological disasters, including the inconceivable, which was a hurricane hitting the South Atlantic. The writing on the wall has gotten bigger and more frighteningly gothic fonts since then. Not least for us, with the visitations of the new, improved, supertyphoons that have bleached parts of this country more efficiently than Mr. Clean. Yes, Virginia, there's a better explanation for the utter devastation of Bicol than the not-entirely-unbelievable theory that the storms knocked everything about in the course of its frenzied search for Edcel Lagman and Luis Villafuerte, per instructions of Divine Retribution. That is, that storms increase in water density and wind velocity from meeting heat, which is what the planet's increasingly steaming oceans today emit.

Completely literally, the oceans—not the least of them the Pacific, which is where the Philippines lies—are whipping up a storm. Suddenly, being the gateway to Asia, which has made this country ideal for US bases, is no longer something to be happy about. It also means being Asia's welcoming committee for Pacific storms.

I won't go into what can be done about this. This is a country that won't move anyway until it's scared to death, and sometimes not even then. But there is that prediction for this year—the closest in known history that we will experience hell on earth. There's only one thing that's scarier than a scary movie. That is a scary truth.

Look at the face of Bicol today and see if words like "climate" and "environment" do not spell the difference between life and death. Between a box of chocolates and a coffin.

Third force often ends up third

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THERE'S TALK ABOUT SOME SENATORS, LED by Senate President Manuel Villar, forming a "third force," and this is hardly surprising. I imagine that they are unable to reconcile themselves to the idea of running in the opposition party of former President Joseph Estrada, whom they all had a hand in ousting. But at the same time they have behaved more like opposition to President Macapagal-Arroyo, with whom they ran five years ago, so that they now cannot run under her party. But the history of the "third force" here shows that it invariably ended up in the third place, since it's normally bereft of a grass-roots machinery and logistics. Moreover, since it had no election inspectors, its votes were regularly stolen.

* * *

Consider the following data, courtesy of Francis Manglapus, whose father, the late Sen. Raul Manglapus, was a favorite candidate of the third force: In 1949, a third force led by Senate President Jose Avelino of the Liberal Party Avelino faction ran in the presidential race pitting Elpidio Quirino against Jose P. Laurel. Quirino won. In 1957, it was a three-cornered fight for the presidency, with the NPs fielding Carlos P. Garcia and Jose P. Laurel, vs. Jose Yulo and Diosdado Macapagal of the LP. The People's Progressive Party (PPP) fielded Manuel Manahan and Vicente Araneta for the top two posts, with Manglapus leading the senatorial candidates. The PPP ended a poor third. That year, in fact, notes Francis, there was a "fourth force" fielded by a citizens' group, composed of Claro Recto and Lorenzo Tañada for president and vice president, respectively. It ended up in fourth place.

* * *

In the 1959 mid-term elections, the PPP decided to metamorphose into the "Grand Alliance" with lots of big guns: Emmanuel Pelaez, Manglapus and Jorge Vargas, among others. Sen. Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo, ran their campaign. But all of them lost miserably in the election, which saw Ferdinand Marcos getting elected as senator. In 1961, Diosdado Macapagal made a deal with the Grand Alliance and ran with Pelaez as his vice president, while other Alliance politicos ran for the Senate. Macapagal and Pelaez won, with Manglapus topping the senatorial race, Manahan second and Rodrigo next. In 1964 Pelaez, who had broken away from Macapagal over "borrowed honor," joined the NPs and slugged it out with Marcos for nomination as the NP presidential candidate. He lost to Marcos who, in 1965, beat reelectionist Macapagal.

* * *

The recent arrival in Japan of Filipino nurses is significant as it comes when Japan and the Philippines are celebrating the 50th anniversary of normalization of relations. When the Asean and East Asian Summits were postponed in Cebu last month, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe went ahead with his state visit to Manila. Abe, 52, who comes from a pedigreed political background (his father was former foreign minister and secretary-general of the ruling LDP, while his maternal grandfather was a former prime minister), is the first Japanese prime minister born after the war.

The subject of Filipino nurses and caregivers took center-stage during that visit. At the state dinner tendered by President Arroyo for Abe and his wife Akie, he alluded to the increasing presence of Filipino health workers in Japan as part of the "comprehensive partnership" between the two countries and "the close relations among all sectors of our two societies." At a press conference, I queried Abe: If the first 50 years of RP-Japan relations were devoted primarily to reconstruction of the former colony, what would be the focus of the second 50 years? He said it would be more about building relations between the two peoples, e.g., human resource development especially at the grass roots, such as the limited entry of Filipino nurses into Japan and expanding youth interaction in Asia through the entry of more foreign students.

* * *

Abe's team of advisers, led by Noriyuki Shikata, assistant press secretary and director of the Foreign Ministry's International Press Division, said at a separate press conference that the Japanese people looked forward to the influx of high-caliber RP labor as part of the comprehensive "Economic Partnership Agreement" recently signed between the two countries. But he admitted that while there's indeed a shortage of caregivers in Japan, there's also apprehension from Japanese workers about Filipinos taking their jobs away. To calm these apprehensions, conditions are being laid down for the Filipinos' entry, such as the need to study the Japanese language. There's a feeling in Manila, though, that the Japanese language would prove insurmountable for most Filipino nurses.

* * *

Abe stressed that Japanese aid to RP cuts across all sectors and ranges from giant infrastructure projects, such as the one in the Agno River, to grass-roots programs in Mindanao. The island has been the focus of much Japanese attention and funding, and he said this will intensify in the coming years, as Japan seeks to promote stability and development in that area as well as contribute to the fight against international terrorism. He noted that last October a senior Japanese economic development advisor was assigned in Mindanao full-time, as part of the International Monitoring Support Team (IMST) and the embassy's Mindanao Task Force. Basing this advisor in Mindanao, where he will oversee projects such as those in energy-building, was recommended by Mme. Ogata, the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who now heads Jica, after her visit late last year.

Abe's aide also stressed that part of the human resource assistance to Mindanao is the training of teachers and students in communication. The prime minister himself stressed that part of Japan's "new initiatives" is assistance in disaster management, where his country has succeeded to a large degree in acquiring needed technology for forecasting disasters.

Waiting

YOUNG BLOOD

Aisa M. Dela Torre

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

ONE THING THAT I PROMISED MYSELF A LONG TIME AGO was that I would never be like my mother.

Our Nanay, whom my siblings and I love so much, is a perfect mother and a perfect wife. Through the years she has nurtured us as best as she could because Tatay is away most of the time. I've seen her cry countless times because she misses my father or she feels overwhelmed by the responsibilities of raising five kids practically all by herself.

I grew up seeing my parents suffer from not being together like a wife and husband should be. My father is home for only two to three months every year and then he is off again for another 10 months of work abroad. It makes me sad to see my mother patiently waiting for his calls or his letters. I worry when she worries. I cry when she cries. I know it is difficult to be a mother and a father at the same time. I can see how hard it can be not to have your better half beside you when things seem to be falling apart, to hold your hands and tell you everything will be fine. So I told myself that if I have my own family someday, I would never let myself be caught in the same situation and experience the same feelings my mother has.

Our family is like many other Filipino families nowadays, where one, if not both parents, are working overseas. My father works on a luxury ship that travels around the world. Some people think that if your father or mother works abroad, you are lucky because then you can buy so many things. But material things cannot fill one's longing for a dear father.

Our life is typical of a Filipino family with relatives abroad. We exchange letters, send greeting cards, receive regularly balikbayan boxes containing imported goods like chocolates, perfumes, shirts, sneakers and sometimes even shampoos and lotions.

That is what my father is: responsible and sensitive to our needs. He provides us with everything, down to the smallest item. Even though he's not around on some special occasions, his children know that he is trying his best to give us the good life he never had.

Father never fails to give us advice, either through letters or—my favorite—greeting cards. Despite the Internet, we still prefer the old methods of communication: snail mail and long-distance calls.

I was in Grade 6 when father started working abroad. And that was when the letters and cards, containing important pieces of advice, started coming. Father constantly reminded me that being the eldest of five children, I should take care of Nanay and my two brothers and two sisters; that I should study hard because education is the only thing we could call our own; that I should not enter into a romantic relationship until I finished college.

Through his letters, father was able to guide me despite his absence. He told me it's nobody's fault that we were poor. He emphasized to us that our own destiny was in our hands and that we shouldn't wait for miracles or good fortune to happen.

For years, his cards and letters arrived, the same pieces of advice repeated over and over again.

In return I tried hard not to disappoint them. I finished my studies and found a stable job and it was a joy to see that I made Nanay and Tatay proud of me. That's my way of letting them know how much I appreciated their sacrifices. It's my way of showing how much grateful I was for being able to study in the university of my choice, something that we couldn't afford if father didn't work abroad.

Nowadays no one is surprised to know that somebody else is abroad and earning high pay. But I, for one, never considered it a normal situation to have members of the same family living apart. But working abroad has become a necessity for many.

It is very hard to be in a long-distance relationship, to be separated from someone dear to you. Endless questions bother you: What if he gets sick, who will take care of him? When he feels homesick, who will be there to comfort him? One cannot help but worry.

But hard as it is for us who are left here waiting, I believe it is even harder for those who are away because they often feel lonely and alone even when they are in the company of other Filipinos.

But fate has this nasty habit of playing with our lives. And for me, the day that I never thought will happen has come. I am waiting for someone who is away, working in a distant land. He is the special someone who told me that I needed a lot of patience to survive feelings of loneliness and emptiness.

Every day before I report for work, I patiently wait for him in the chat room to check if he has come home from work. Every day I wake up excited to read his e-mail. Thanks to modern technology, I no longer have to wait for two weeks for the postman before I could get some news about him.

Now I am walking on the same path my parents took. Heck, even my sister and her fiancé are in the same situation, being apart temporarily for the same financial reason. But who are not?

I was wrong to say I would never let myself be caught in the situation my mother was. I have realized that love is such a strong force that moves people to do things they thought they would never do.

At home these days, one often hears some very familiar words. But while one used to hear a younger sibling shout, "*Nay, telephone call si Tatay po*," now it is, "*Ate, telephone call si Kuya Marc.*"

I count the days when I will see him again. In the meantime, just like my mother and my sister, I am waiting.

Aisa M. Dela Torre, 24, has a master's degree in library and information science from the University of the Philippines.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Oprah's $40-million school for girls

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

I MADE A MISTAKE LAST WEEK. INSTEAD OF writing $40 million, I wrote $40,000. That's minus three zeroes or a staggering difference of $39,960,000. I wanted to show how big $40 million was, so I wrote the numbers—zeroes and all—(instead of the word million) but I fell short of three zeroes.

So how does $40,000,000 look now? That was how much US TV giant Oprah Winfrey spent to build a school for poor girls in South Africa. The Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls opened last Jan. 2 with the first 75 students whom Oprah herself had handpicked.

I promised Edna Zapanta Manlapaz, one of those who pointed out the error and who sent me the January 2007 issue of the Oprah magazine, that I would write a longer piece on the "academy." The latest issue has the story about how the school came to be, what it is like and the process of choosing the first students. The story, "Building a Dream" is by Pamela Gien and the photographs by Graham Abbott.

Five years and $40 million were not all that it took to build—for the building of this dream began much earlier, that is, in the heart of a woman who had known what it was to be poor, black and sexually abused—and who rose to become one of the world's richest, most popular and loved media giant.

The article's main blurb says: "It started as a wish—for a first-class school that would nurture, educate and turn gifted South African girls from impoverished backgrounds into the country's future leaders."

The academy sits on a 22-hectare site south of Johannesburg, the Department of Education's suggested site. And it is first-class in amenities, landscape, building construction, artistic details, name it. A dream world indeed for girls who have not been in anything like it. And sure, this must have raised some eyebrows, including mine.

But here, from the Oprah magazine article, are its "whys" and "whynots."

"Creating this school has not been easy, logistically or socially. From the beginning, (Oprah) struggled to explain her vision, a school that could 'contain the emotional, spiritual selves of the girls.' Because these girls come from poverty, she was first given designs she felt looked like a chicken coop, then a barracks. Planners advised that these African children were not accustomed to much: no water, no electricity, some share a bed with relatives.

"Oprah was told that the simplest environment would be a luxury to them that they would need only basics. She sent the plans back. 'I said from the start, I am creating everything in this school that I would have wanted for myself—so the girls will have the absolute best that my imagination can offer…'

"Now it's a full campus with 26 buildings… At first glance, the effect is an unusual combination of functionality and elegance. The architecture has African roots, quiet, earthy, beautiful. The bricks, chosen by Oprah, echo the soft gold of the sand on which the school is built, making it seem as if it sprang up organically from the earth."

That is the physical. Now Oprah makes her pitch. "When I became successful as a journalist, I knew that it was a part of me to give back to girls who are like myself... My own success has come from a strong background in reading and learning, the greatest gift you can give is the gift of learning… I want somebody who already knows that education is empowerment, and who wouldn't have had the chance to fulfill the great possibilities of her life had this not happened. I want to change the trajectory of a child's life."

Oprah's deep love for South Africa's hero and former president, Nelson Mandela, was a great driving force in making her dream of a school come true. In a country where violence against females is epidemic, wrote Gien, where many girls under the age of 10 have already been raped, where the estimate for HIV infection in children and adults is one in eight, and more than 36 percent of black women are unemployed, often illiterate, and subsisting in tin shanties, a chance like this for a young African girl is akin to suddenly finding yourself on a rocket to the moon.

The girls, mostly on the threshold of adolescence, will have a lot to marvel at. They will become big in the eyes of their communities. They will become the "new elite."

The phrase rankles. But only if it means becoming a breed apart and alienated from their roots. Might these girls become that? Or could "new elite" mean the future compassionate, benevolent leaders who will help others rise to heights they have never known and to become the best?

Questions always rise when the best and brightest of the poor are plucked, either to mix with their rich counterparts, or to be plunked into a privileged environment. What will they become? What will this do to their character? What happens to their families? Will they be able to find the road back?

I know of special schools for students coming from indigenous communities. Are they better off among themselves or should they go mainstream?

Should it always be the brightest? Oprah herself didn't start off as a promising kid. She grew up poor with her grandma in rural Mississippi. Raped at 9, sexually abused until she was 14, pregnant at a young age. (The baby died.) Her father told her: "This is your second chance. Make good on it."

Would the Oprah now have handpicked the young troubled Oprah? Oftentimes, it is the average, overlooked kid (not those in the honors list) that later excels in her/his field (like Einstein). It is the poor, oppressed and abused who grow the biggest heart, and who, with just a little help, become an Oprah.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Win a few, lose a few

HIGH BLOOD

Eduardo V. Nievera, M.D.

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I GET THE URGE TO be profound, provocative, philosophical or pugnacious. It depends perhaps on my hormones, enzymes and the weather.

My breakfast digestive juices are stirred each time I open the morning papers and read mostly the same mush of political circuses, never-ending wars, calamities, economic woes and catch-22 crimes. I turn to an inside page and obituaries greet me. During our coffee break, colleagues who belong to generations over age 40 complain about being hounded by dimming vision, middle-age crises, menopausal-climacteric symptoms and the feeling that time flies faster.

Going back to my favorite (though, honestly, not all the time) newspaper, except for some well-written columns, the editorial and features on photography and gardening, which are two of my hobbies, I can face the day only with some trepidation. The write-ups on horticulture, landscaping and the recent efforts to green the highways of the entire country are as refreshing as the proverbial morning sun and dew. They stir the embers of my passion for writing. Noticeable and uplifting are the occasional topics of hard-hitting and incisive columnists when they so exquisitely describe the native beauty and bounties of our land—which sadly, are dissipating like the bygone days of fire trees and fireflies.

Going to medicine, some articles appearing in the newspapers seem to be lifted straight from a book or medical journal. Whether in print, over the radio or on TV specially, I just dearly wish that the good doctors who guest in the programs would try harder to speak in less scientific terms so that the average (and majority) of the audience would appreciate better what is being discussed. Or, as much as possible speak in the vernacular, so the less educated would benefit, too, from the discussion. I quite understand that the discussants are more comfortable with the terminologies used in medical circles, but the average family member would fail to appreciate the gist of what is being discussed. It seems to be a waste of prime time.

Take music, as another example. To the older generation, soothing music and ballads having more sensible lyrics which are associated with old-fashioned romance and calmer days, are less vexing to the ears and the spirit. The lyrics of a favorite song goes, "Time is wasted on the young." How true and how false, depending on your age, I guess. During the green years of one's life, one can well afford to be brave, choose to put off doing things or just laze around. During the "September of one's life," one has the luxury of reminiscing and assuming a laid-back attitude. For the young, the louder the volume and the less decipherable the words, the better the music. Or as some wag said, is it because senior citizens have developed a more acute sense of hearing with age that they prefer to turn the volume dial counterclockwise and the decibels lower?

Way back during my post-graduate training, a mentor told me to develop, when writing conclusions in diagnostic reports, the habit of "sticking your neck out despite the danger of its being chopped off, and sticking it out to stand above the crowd." Fine. But I later found out that a little prudence and, more important, solid training and experience are necessary ingredients. Which brings us to the state of education and test leakages, but a discussion of these things is better left for when we have a less dismal weather and the sun is out.

One day, while walking along the corridor of a modern hospital, I noticed on one wall an array of enlarged sepia pictures honoring the well-known physicians who already passed to the great beyond. Not many of the passersby and staff took time to read the plaques or glance at the photographs. Which set me to thinking: During their time, these were the giants of their profession. They gave their share of comforting and curing the sick as well as teaching and sharing their wealth of experience with the young. Like the faded pictures, their history seemed to be slowly fading with the passage of time. Who was it who said that if records of what one did and of any difference he or she made in this world in his or her lifetime were not kept, it is as if one never existed?

At the risk of being defensive and trying to cater to the young and the complexities of modernity, I actually enjoy the exuberance and inquisitiveness of their generation, the excitement of discoveries of new technologies as well as the tremendous strides in various aspects of modern living and communication. Include the fact that our young women (all right, include those above 50) are prettier and more beguiling because of natural gene selection, better nutrition and fashion. These are enough to make me wish I were 30 years old again.

Oh well, as the song (again!) says, you win a few, you lose a few.

Eduardo V. Nievera, M.D., 72, is with the Radiology Department of the Makati Medical Center.

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Smith case and 2007 elections

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER the midnight transfer of convicted rapist, US Marine Daniel Smith, to the custody of the US Embassy rightly focuses on the substantive constitutional issue; but it probably inadvertently misses the case's implications on the 2007 Philippine elections.

The political opposition should realize that the Smith case has the potential of, at worst, costing it the May 2007 elections and ensuring the continued dominance of the present administration.

The US government is well known for being supportive of "friendly" (read: fawning) officials of foreign governments regardless of their standing among their own people (e.g., Manuel Noriega of Panama, Saddam Hussein of Iraq and our own Ferdinand Marcos). The US government intervenes financially and logistically to ensure the continuation in office of such leaders (notwithstanding its failure to prevent Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and, perhaps, also Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva of Brazil from winning).

May 2007 is not a presidential election, but the survival of the present administration is at stake in that exercise. I am not suggesting that the Americans will violate Philippine electoral laws, although that is not a farfetched possibility. But they can legally provide more financial and logistical aid to the Philippines, which our incumbent officials can rechannel to other uses, such as helping ensure the victory of administration candidates.

Unfortunately, our opposition currently suffers from a lack of charismatic, nationalistic leaders who have the appeal of an Ortega, Chavez or Lula; and, therefore, "logistics" can play a more decisive role in our forthcoming elections.

—VICENTE T. VILLEGAS,
121 Washington Ave. South,
Minneapolis, MN 55401, USA

No specific terror threats last month to Asean Summit

I WRITE THIS LETTER IN CONNECTION with a news item titled "Asean Summit all systems go in Cebu, including anti-GMA protests, road repairs." (PDI, 1/5/07)

A part of the report quoted me as saying: "[T]here were no specific terror threats, unlike last month when the United States, Britain, Australia and Japan issued travel advisories warning that al-Qaida-linked militants might have been in the final stages of planning attacks in the Philippines."

I do not remember having made any statement to the effect that there were specific terror threats to the Asean Summit last month. On the contrary, based on available AFP intelligence, we categorically denied the presence of validated terror threats.

—LT. COL. BARTOLOME VO BACARRO,
chief, Pubilc Information Office,
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo,
Quezon City

Priests also human beings; pray for them, too

I AGREE THAT CHARACTER CHANGE IS for all, including clergymen, as was suggested in two letters that appeared last Dec. 29 and Jan. 3. Even for the holiest of persons, there is always room for improvement.

But I am saddened whenever I read or hear of criticisms against our priests. I am saddened when the heroic acts of many priests are disparaged. Because of their busy schedules, priests have little time to sleep. They set up parishes in depressed areas, administer sacraments and blessings and give seminars and talks in different places from day to day; missionaries have to travel to faraway lands.

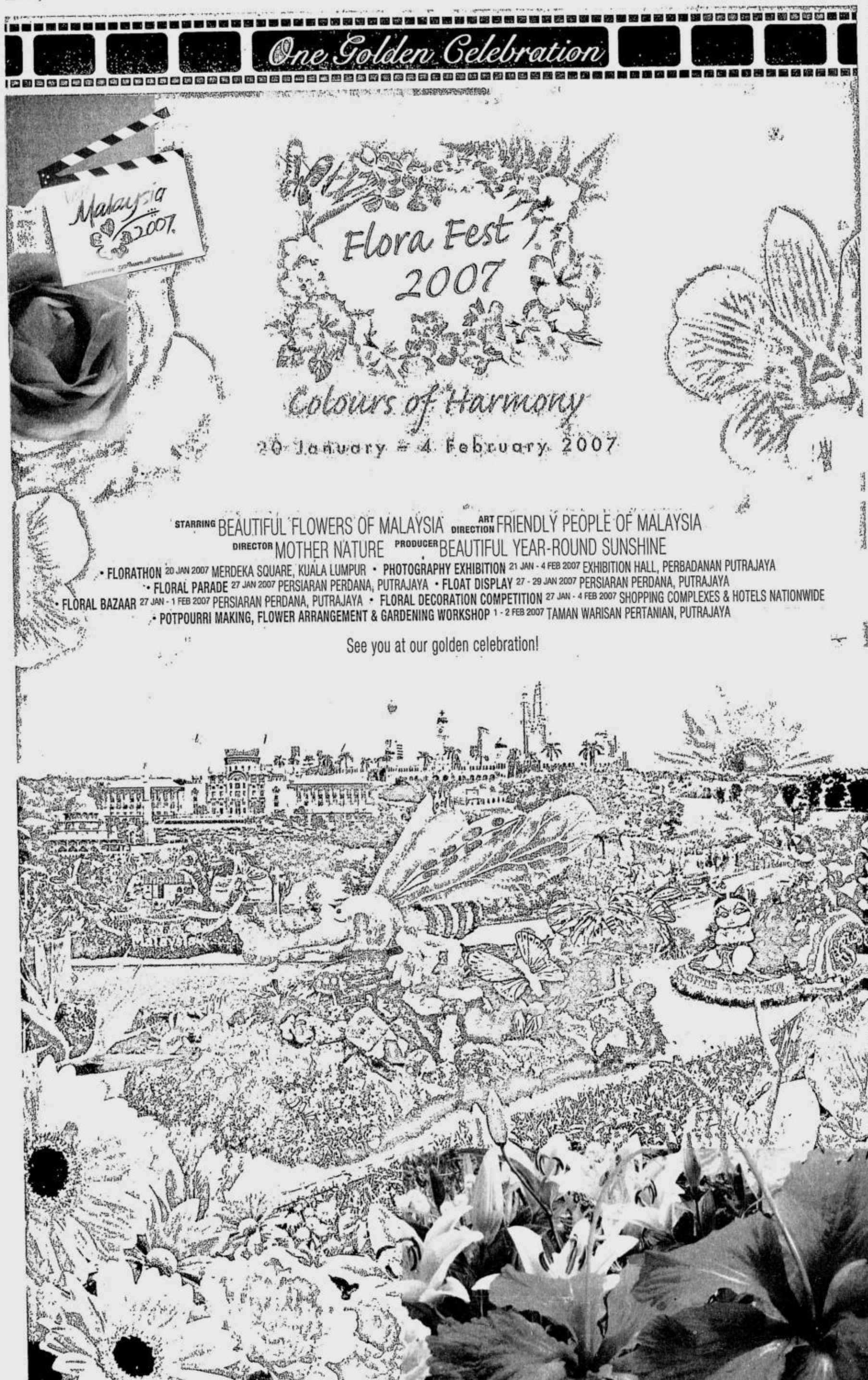
Yes, priests have their weaknesses. They are just human beings and we have to understand that they are under so much pressure. Their humanity, along with the frailties that come with it, does not vanish upon their ordination. Life is also a constant struggle for them.

I am not saying this to justify any wrong they might have done or may do. (For only God may judge them). I am saying this to ask the public to understand and pray for our priests for they need so much prayer. They need our prayers as much as we need their pastoral services.

Priests can only do so much. They are so few and they have to minister to so many people. They really need our support and prayers. As Jesus said, "The harvest is large but there are few workers to gather in it. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest." The subtle demand for their services is much more than we can ever imagine.

Let me end this letter by echoing God's call "to go and preach the Gospel to all nations." That exhortation is not only for priests but also for all of us. And for us to do God's bidding, we do not need to have full knowledge of the Gospel. All we need is love, true love—and to communicate that love to others, even if we are hated, oppressed, misunderstood and disregarded by them. For that is what true, unconditional love is. That is the love that is most rewarding. After all, we are all brothers and sisters, and we all have to answer for one another.

—BRIAN S. SANTOS,
brian.santos@up.edu.ph



Picop complied with legal requirements

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE JAN. 4 COLumn of Juan L. Mercado, where he noted that then Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez was so strict with the Paper Industries Corporation of the Philippines (Picop) because he was concerned for the environment and he wanted to force Picop to abide by the law. This is very far from the truth.

Picop had complied with the purported administrative requirements. Court records show this. The statutory requirements do not cover the Picop project as it had been in operation since 1971.

A memo, dated Sept. 13, 2002 (from Alvarez) shows that he just wanted to exclude 28,125 hectares from the area covered by the automatic conversion of TLA (timber license agreement) 43 to Integrated Forest Management Agreement (Ifma). That exclusion effectively allowed the destruction of forests. Alvarez made it appear in this memo that Picop had agreed to the deductions. Again, this is not true.

Does any of the following show love for the environment:

1. To convert a natural forest into alienable and disposable lands (660 hectares) for residential or commercial use?

2. To allow the complete denudation of 3,400 hectares through community based forest management?

3. To "tolerate" an "unreleased" CADC (certificate of ancestral domain claim) 95 (covering 17,112 hectares) which the DENR legal division found to be anomalous?

4. To convert into a mining area 8,100 hectares of wooded area in Diwalwal? In fact, out of the 8,100 hectares, 3,657 hectares are protected under RA 7586, a law that Alvarez himself authored while he was a senator. In his haste to convert the 8,100-hectare forest reserve into a mining area, Alvarez declared an emergency in Diwalwal, purportedly to stop the mining activities, then signed mining agreements and legalized the operation of unlicensed miners in the area.

What motivated Alvarez to declare an emergency, a power vested by the Constitution solely in the President? What motivated Alvarez to sign mining contracts that "authorized" mining activities in forest reserves and protected areas in violation of RA 7586? The contracts were subsequently declared illegal by the justice department.

Why did Alvarez sign many Ifmas wherein he did not require the same stringent (actually out-of-line requirements) he demanded of Picop? One Ifma guarantee was not even registered with the SEC.

A group of companies, owned and controlled by foreigners, was granted a total of 169,000 hectares. Why five companies? To evade the maximum area limit of 40,000 hectares per new Ifma proponent with no previous track record. Four of the companies had only P68,800 each in paid-up capital. The fifth had P400,000. The total is not even enough to pay for a boundary survey.

In a paid ad that appeared in the July 27, 2002 issue of the Philippine Star, Alvarez claimed that all he asked from Picop was "substantial compliance." Marites Vitug discussed the meaning of the term in Page 36 of the PCIJ book, "Power from the Forest."

—DOMINGO R. TUMAMBING,
senior forester and president,
Society of Filipino Foresters Inc.,
Caraga Council

Sound of bias

I HAVE OBSERVED THAT THE INQUIRER IS biased against Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith. Ninety-nine percent of its articles about Smith are against him; I always read columns condemning Smith; and the news stories are not fair and balanced.

How could the INQUIRER people say that Smith raped Nicole? Were they there?

Yes, Judge Benjamin Pozon said Smith is guilty, but he's just one man. Why don't we take into consideration the testimony of the driver of the van that night? What happened to Nicole was her fault. Why was she in Subic that night?

I dare the INQUIRER to make a survey and ask ordinary Filipinos whether they think she was raped or not. Only then would it be proper for the INQUIRER to write about the issue, without blaming Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez or President Macapagal-Arroyo for acting the way they did.

—MA. MYLENE DIZON,
mdzon@yahoo.com

Criminal cases are not decided on the basis of public opinion —Ed.

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Judge releases 24 Chinese poachers

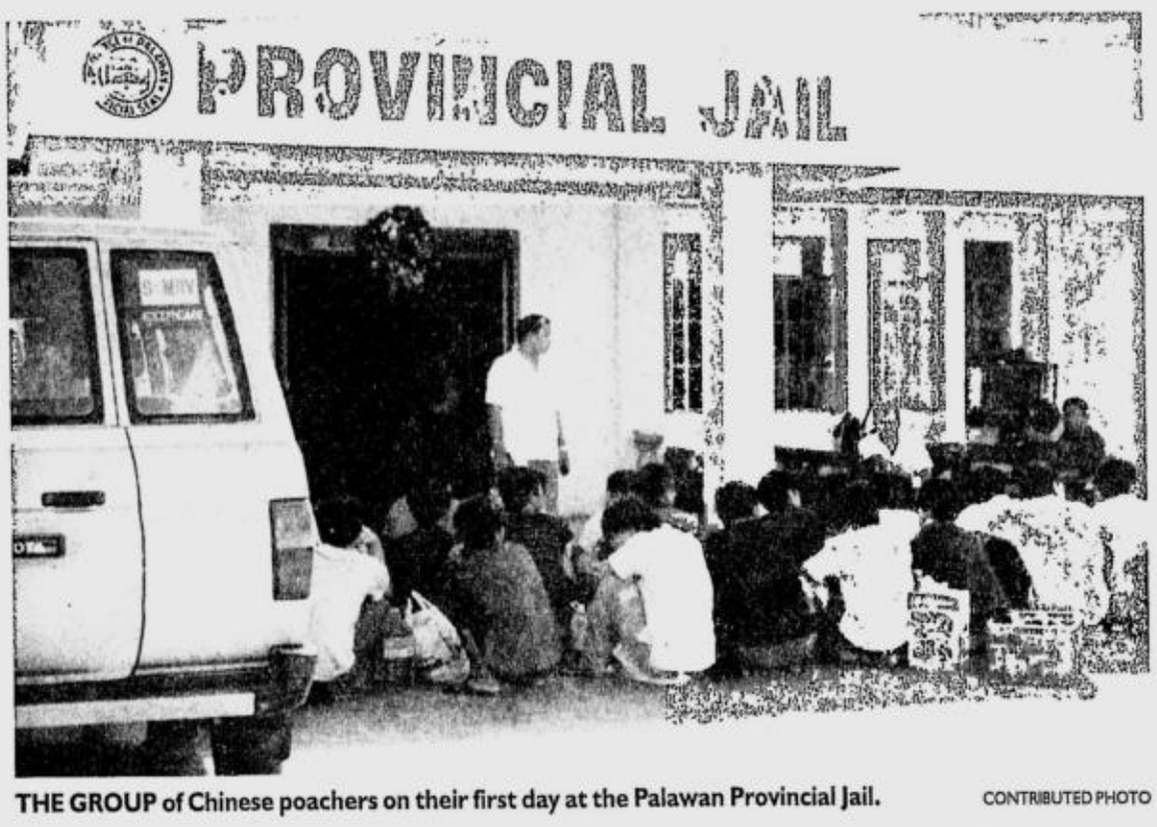
CALAMBA CITY—A Palawan regional trial court judge has ordered the release of the 24 remaining Chinese poachers who were jailed after they were caught encroaching upon the protected Tubbataha Reefs while in possession of an endangered fish species, an official said Wednesday.

Angelique Songco, manager of the Tubbataha Marine Office, said Judge Torribio Ilao of Branch 52 of the Puerto Princesa Regional Trial Court issued the release order on Monday.

Ilao's sala is the assigned environmental court in Palawan, Songco said.

The arrested Chinese were among the 30 crew members of the fishing vessel Hoi Wan which was intercepted by Marine rangers inside the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park on Dec. 21, 2006.

Six of those arrested, including the boat captain, posted bail last week so they could look after their boat docked at the Puerto Princesa Port.



THE GROUP of Chinese poachers on their first day at the Palawan Provincial Jail. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Songco said the 24 Chinese fishermen paid a total of P816,000 in bail bond.

She said the poachers paid P30,000 each for violation of Section 87 of the Fisheries Code and P4,000 for violation of the National Integrated Protected Areas Act.

She expressed dismay over the decision of Ilao to allow the release of the fishermen from the provincial jail.

"Although the Chinese have the right to post bail, this case sets a bad precedent for similar cases in the future. Our morale is really low right now. But this is just a temporary setback," Songco told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

She said that despite this, her group would continue to push for the other cases they filed against the foreign poachers.

Court charges

She said her group had gained the support of several environmental groups, like the World Wildlife Fund, which are helping them pursue the court charges.

Songco said she was hoping that the court in Roxas town in Palawan would immediately issue an arrest warrant for the separate cases they filed for violation of Sections 97 and 100 of the Fisheries Code.

The cases are still under preliminary investigation.

Songco, on behalf of the province, also filed a criminal case against the Chinese fishermen for violating the provincial ordinance on the use of air compressors.

She raised concern over the possibility that the Chinese would eventually leave the country and escape from their legal liabilities.

No hold

"Technically speaking, we cannot stop them from leaving the country," she said.

Songco then called on Ilao to immediately resolve the petition her group filed for a hold-departure order to all the Chinese fishermen.

Songco said a case of obstruction of justice was filed yesterday against the captain of Hoi Wan, Huang Ya Liu, and their interpreter, Tim Il Wok.

She said that on Jan. 3, the two tried to snatch the boat's fish finder with a Global Positioning System plotter, a device used in finding fish in the sea.

Songco said the device was one of the major pieces of evidence to be used in the criminal cases.

She said the court had already issued an order to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to release the confiscated fish found inside the Chinese boat.

She said the BFAR intended to release the *lapu-lapu* and snappers (*maya-maya*) stocks at around 3 p.m. yesterday outside the Puerto Princesa Bay.

Songco said it might take a while before the endangered Napoleon wrasse (Mameng), a reef fish species, could be released into the sea because of turbulent waves in the Tubbataha.

"Maybe we can release the *mameng* in March or whenever the weather would allow us to transport them back to Tubbataha," she said. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

2 missing as rains bring floods to Caraga

BUTUAN CITY—TWO PERSONS were declared missing as heavy rains continued while at least 5,424 families were displaced by floods that swept this city and six towns of Caraga Region.

The region is a flood-prone area and dozens of residents died due to similar calamities in the past.

Disaster officials said heavy rains since last week have caused tributaries to overflow, submerged many villages and forced people to evacuate.

Blanche Gobenciong, director of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Caraga, identified one of the missing persons as Roberto Palapas, 31.

She said the boat that Palapas was riding in capsized off San Miguel town in Surigao del Sur on Tuesday.

The provincial disaster management center (PDMC) of Agusan del Sur also reported that a high school student in Veruela town remained missing after being swept by strong river current on Tuesday morning.

Roberto Natividad, PDMC coordinator, said Lemuel Serrano, 15, a resident of Sitio San Antonio in Barangay Sampaguita, was trying to cross the Baubo River using a wooden raft but was overwhelmed by strong currents.

Gobenciong said in Butuan alone, more than 1,000 families have been displaced by rising floodwaters.

"Most of those affected in Butuan were living in low-lying areas near the Agusan River," she said.

Other flooded areas in the region were: Las Nieves, Remedios Romualdez and Jabonga towns in Agusan del Norte; Talacogon and San Francisco in Agusan del Sur and San Miguel in Surigao del Sur.

In Surigao City, Mayor Alfonso Casurra told a local radio station that at least 12 families have been evacuated after a landslide buried nine houses on a hillside subdivision in Barangay Bonifacio.

But Casurra said no casualty had been reported.

Gobenciong said the number of displaced families could still increase as the bad weather continues.

"Based on the weather forecast the rains will continue up until next week, so we are expecting an increase in the number of affected families," she said.

Gobenciong said her office was still trying to determine the damage wrought by the calamity. *Franklin Caliguid and Chris Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao*

Packing facility raises hopes for Benguet veggie trade

BUGUIAS, BENGUET—THE PROVince's first packing and pre-cooling facility right in the middle of vegetable farms will rise in Loo Valley here, making farmers and local officials upbeat over the facility's market and cash returns.

The facility is worth P1 million, courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, but Mayor Thomas Palileng said the facility's completion would revolutionize the town's trade system by providing a direct link between the production area and markets in the cities.

"The facility will allow farmers to bring their products directly to the market without necessarily passing through the layers of middlemen at the La Trinidad vegetable trading post," Palileng said.

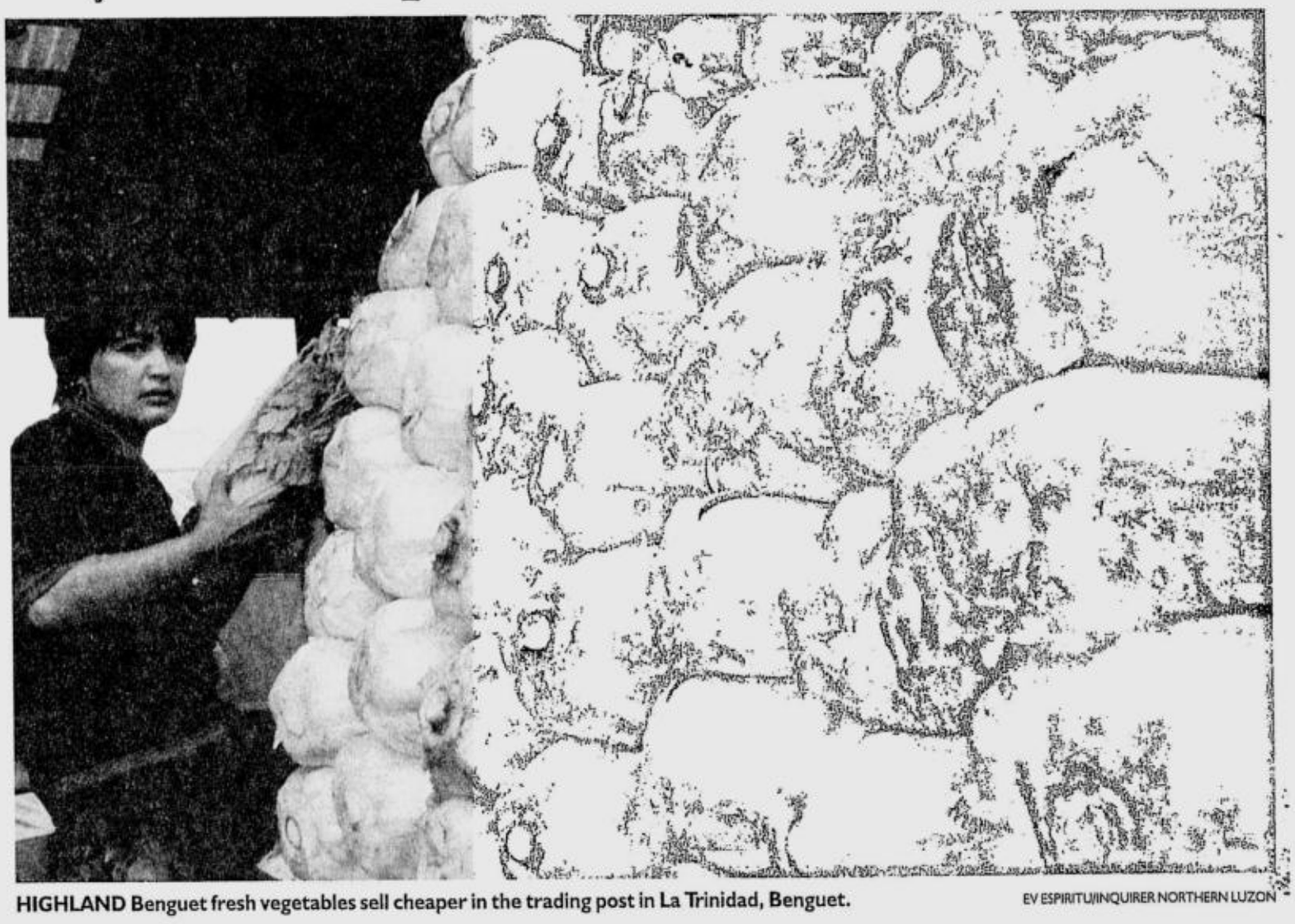
This is because after the vegetables are harvested, these would be cleaned and packed at the facility and later loaded in farmers' trucks for hauling to the market, he said.

The pre-cooling system would enable the farmers to preserve the freshness of their crops, a condition necessary for the cold chain system, he said.

This town has 13,704 farmers tilling 8,592 hectares of agricultural land.

It is a major producer of potatoes (80,131 metric tons a year), carrots (39,559 MT), cabbage (70,302 MT), lettuce (887 MT) and Chinese cabbage (36,574 MT).

The town's daily production forms part of the 1.5 million kilograms of vegetables traded at the La Trinidad vegetable trading post where disposers and truckers haul vegetables to Metro Manila and other provinces, including those in Southern Luzon.



HIGHLAND Benguet fresh vegetables sell cheaper in the trading post in La Trinidad, Benguet. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Palileng felt the facility could also attract farmers from the other vegetable producing towns like Mankayan and Bauko in Mt. Province.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the check for the facility's infrastructure outlay at the Benguet State University on Dec. 28.

The facility, which is due for completion after three months, would also harness the participation of farmers' cooperatives in the vegetable trade, Palileng said.

The Bad-ayan Buguias Development Multipurpose Cooperative, the biggest in the town, will be responsible in identifying its members who are willing to commit a sustained level of vegetable supply.

Bernadette Willie, general manager, said the 34-year-old cooperative was willing to help the facility improve the lives of farmers by granting loans to farmers who wanted to avail of the facility's services. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Rains bring disaster to Southern Leyte towns

By Joey A. Gabieta and Jani Arnaiz
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—AT LEAST three people were buried alive while two others survived when their house was hit by a landslide Monday in Barangay Tampoong, Sogod town, Southern Leyte.

Salvador Estudillo, director of the Office of Civil Defense in Eastern Visayas, identified one of the fatalities as Mercedes Cadavos, 68, whose body was recovered by the town's police rescue group.

Husband and wife Emilio, 52 and Lilia, 54, Cadavos were still missing.

The OCD said the two survivors are Julian Cawaling, 70, and Juvan Reyes, 15, grandson of Emilio and Lilia Cadavos. Reyes was able to leave the house before it was buried.

The five were inside their house, made of light materials, when the landslide caused by the incessant rains occurred, Estudillo said.

He said 350 families were displaced by floods in Barangay Tambis Uno in St. Bernard town, also in Southern Leyte. Another village in the same town, Sta. Cruz, was also threatened by floods, Estudillo said.

The families were evacuated to the town's ABC Hall as the local government under Mayor Maria Lim provided food assistance to the evacuees.

Another landslide was reported along a road section in Barangay Agas-Agas in Sogod, due to the rains that hit the region for weeks now. No fatality was reported in the landslide, said Tonette Lim, regional information officer of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

In Tacloban City, an 8-month-old baby girl drowned when she fell from a bamboo bed as their house, located in Barangay Apitong, was flooded. The water from a nearby creek overflowed due to the incessant rains.

WATERFALLS form on a hillside along the Maharlika Highway in Libagon and Liloan towns in Southern Leyte. Continued rains brought flooding to the two and several other towns. JANI ARNAIZ/INQUIRER VISAYAS

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Albay classes start amid hope, gloom

By Gina V. Rodriguez
Legazpi City

HER EYES GLOWING AND HER curly hair in a neat bun, Kristelle Magdaong, 11, seemed prepared for the first day of school on Monday even if all she had was a newly bought notebook and pen. All her textbooks, which were soaked at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming," could no longer be retrieved.

A Grade 5 pupil, Kristelle had been out of the Gogon Central Elementary School in Legazpi City for more than a month. Classes were suspended after Reming damaged an estimated 80 percent of school buildings in Albay, according to disaster officials.

Kristelle said her experience with the typhoon taught her the "need to be alert."

When classes resumed, she narrated in a theme-writing exercise how her father, a casual worker at Legazpi Oil Co., carried each of her three siblings—all of them high school students—on his shoulders to safety in the high grounds.

"Mabuti na lang marunong lumangoy ang tatay ko (It's a good thing that my father knows how to swim)," she said, remembering how the waters reached the roof of their house along the railways.

Although it now has nipa shingles for roofing material, their shelter is still a ramshackle affair. But this has not dampened Kristelle's enthusiasm to learn. "I want to finish school," she told her teacher emphatically.

AFTER more than a month, classes resume at the Legazpi Port Elementary School in Legazpi City, one of the evacuation centers of Supertyphoon "Reming" victims. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Attendance in her school was a low 56 percent of the total population of 867. School personnel were able to find alternative places for the seven classrooms "blown away" out of the 25 classrooms, said Teresita Aynera, the principal.

"When it's raining outside, it's raining inside," she said, referring to the leaking roofs.

"Repair started on Wednesday, however, as funds have been committed by the DepEd," Aynera said.

Send-off

Before classes resumed on Monday, the elementary school served as evacuation center for 481 families (2,881 people) of Barangay Padang, one of the villages heavily affected by "Reming" in terms of lost lives and houses.

"Despite the devastation suffered by all, we did our best to house them," said Aynera. She related that a cluster of more than 30 families found space in each of the 25 classrooms.

On Sunday, the evacuees spent their "last day in school" cleaning the campus grounds. As early as 6 a.m., trucks were on standby outside, ready to transport the families to a relocation site in Barangay Taysan, a hilly portion of the city.

Earlier, Mayor Noel Rosal had briefed them about what to expect in the relocation site, which he described as far better even though facilities were still being constructed.

"In Barangay Padang, we do not know what will happen next. The Phivolcs (Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology) has already declared that a lot more lava will flow from Mayon Volcano. It is something uncontrollable by the city government," Rosal explained to the villagers.

It was an emotional send-off to the residents who seemed "lost" and "empty," said Estrella Rivero, officer in charge of the Gogon Central Elementary School. Daily, she had been in touch with the 27 classroom leaders picked by the evacuees themselves to handle the school's upkeep.

A schoolteacher in the same school, Rivera said the evacuees were holding back tears when they bid each other farewell.

"I could still feel their deprivation—of their loved ones and property—and their being wary about having to reestablish on new grounds," recounted Rivera, who has been teaching for the past 30 years.

"They still don't know how they will be able to survive anew, away from the caring hands of relief workers who assisted them during their stay in the evacuation site," she added.

Padang

No pupil from Padang attended the first day of classes at the Taysan relocation site, according to city schools division superintendent Regina Sarte.

Except for Taysan, a 60-percent turnout of students was noted in schools in Legazpi. The city has a total school population of 23,322 in the elementary level and about 3,500 in high school.

Sarte said that the damaged roofs of school buildings were undergoing repair, while textbooks were being procured in coordination with the Department of Education and the local schools board.

But resources are still inadequate, she said as she appealed to the private sector and other civic and nongovernment organizations to help the school children by donating construction materials for the schools.

For Kristelle, notebooks, pencils, pad paper and textbooks to replace those that were washed out by Reming will go a long way in keeping her in school.

A number of her classmates and schoolmates, however, are not sure if they could return to school immediately.

"They may transfer residences as their parents are scouting for work elsewhere, maybe in Manila," said Edith Padayon, Kristelle's teacher.

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Marinduque children given 'space' to cope with disaster

THERE IS HOPE AFTER A DISASTER.

This was among the many positive messages imparted by facilitators of the World Vision to about 1,400 children from 10 barangays of Sta. Cruz town in Marinduque in sessions meant to heal the trauma brought by Supertyphoon "Reming."

Facilitators of the psychosocial intervention program, launched on Dec. 11-20 last year, reminded the children that despite their sad experiences, there is hope and joy from the Christmas story. This is an integral part of the relief effort of the World Vision, a Christian development, relief and advocacy organization that ensures care for children as a priority concern.

Cesar Bautista, World Vision team leader of the Marinduque relief effort, said that aside from assisting the affected families, Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) had been set up, usually in evacuation centers or specific areas in a community where children can go, feel safe, play and interact with others.

A CFS provides a sense of safety and structure to the children amid overwhelming experiences. Activities help them express themselves and deal with negative emotions related to the disaster.

"One of the main purposes is to assist the children as they regain a sense of normalcy after a tragic experience and to instill hope in them," said Cherry Marcelo, a lead facilitator.

"In Marinduque, a Child-Friendly Space did not mean a structure, but a time or an opportunity for children to be listened to and get answers to their questions related to the disaster. It is a space for the children to redescribe their view of what they experienced," she added.

The activities aim to allow children to learn that they have the right to be protected, especially in times of emergency, express their thoughts and feelings related to the disaster, realize that there are people and structures in the community that care for and support them.

A CHILD from Marinduque tells her story of survival during healing sessions conducted by the World Vision. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

But for the facilitators, the most important aim of the program is to allow the children to share common experiences.

To ensure that the objectives are carried out and monitored effectively, 36 elementary school teachers, six student volunteers from the Marinduque State College and a representative from the municipal office were trained on the psychosocial activity modules.

"The program can help the children realize that they are unique and special in different ways. And they are worth being loved," said Percival Pineda, one of the student volunteers.

Gerald Gene R. Querubin

Benguet poll bets told: Tackle mines, veggie trade

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—ISsues affecting the province's vegetable and mining industries are expected to sink or swim with the tide of the local political campaign this year.

The Lakas-CMD, the administration's main political party, started the province's political season here when more than 40 local officials and political aspirants took their oath as party members on Tuesday.

But Benguet's Lakas stalwarts said the campaign period must be used to define what stand and what programs the province must take on vital issues affecting the province's industries.

Board Member Aloysius Kato said the May elections must provide the playing field to discuss measures that have an impact on the livelihood of farmers and small-scale miners.

"The election campaign must not abandon the issues," he said.

He said he feared that the election would turn out to be more personality than issue-oriented.

Kato said what must be made clear to the people are the issues affecting three main concerns—vegetables, entrepreneurial opportunities for low-income families and the environment.

Benguet Rep. Samuel Dangwa, Lakas chair in the province, said the local economy would be a major topic in the election.

Agriculture, mining and small enterprises, in that order, he said, must be addressed enough to let the people understand them. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

EFFECTS OF 'REMING'

Gov fears extreme poverty in Albay

By Bobby Q. Labalan and Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—EXTREME POVERty is likely to follow the devastation wrought by Supertyphoon 'Reming,' according to Gov. Fernando Gonzales who appealed for more help to alleviate the sufferings of his constituents.

"It's a very grim prospect for us," Gonzales told the INQUIRER during a roundtable discussion with the Inquirer Southern Luzon on Monday.

He urged institutions and governments to help in the rehabilitation of the communities.

Gonzales said government efforts were now geared toward rehabilitation, which, he added, required more funds.

"We have at least 8,000 families who need to be relocated immediately to get them out of harm's way," he said.

The local governments of Ligao City, Guinobatan, Camalig, Daraga and Legazpi City have identified relocation sites but lack funds for their development, he said.

He thanked the private sector and non-government organizations (NGOs), especially those helping in the repair of damaged schools in Batan, Cagraray and Rapu-rapu islands and in other parts of the province.

Another NGO helped rehabilitate a hospital in Tabaco City, he added.

"But the biggest problem confronting us is how to rehabilitate the people's livelihood, especially the farmers whose coconut and rice farms were almost completely destroyed," he said.

Irrigation dams in many towns were destroyed, rendering rice farms without water.

The majority of people in Albay derive income from rice and coconut farming.

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Angelo Reyes and Mayor Juan Garcia of Guinobatan town in Albay distribute relief goods to the victims of Reming in Barangay Travesia, Guinobatan, Albay. More than relief goods, the province's governor said the people need livelihood or face abject poverty. NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Gary

In a two-day visit to Albay, singer Gary Valenciano, who arrived on Monday as Unicef ambassador, sang and spread the message of hope to thousands of children.

Valenciano, whose father is from Camalig, Albay, visited public schools in Daraga and Guinobatan, which serve as shelters for villagers displaced by lahar from Mayon Volcano.

At the Tabon-tabon Elementary School in Daraga, where homeless typhoon victims from Barangay Malobago have sought refuge, Valenciano sang to hundreds of children inside a 72-square-meter tent.

At the jampacked hall of the Guinobatan East Central School, children gaped in awe at Valenciano as he sang "I will be here" and "Natutulog ba ang Diyos?"

Unicef communications assistant Kathleen Pobre said it was as if the children had never experienced tragedy with smiles beaming on their faces.

Valenciano told the children that despite the disaster, they should never stop going to school and studying hard.

The Unicef gave learning materials, such as books, recreational and sports equipment, and tents for temporary classrooms.

Tears

Valenciano interacted with Thea Jane Liantos, 8, who told him that she lost her mother when mudflow struck Barangay Maipon.

With braces to support her body because of a congenital spine illness, Thea survived the tragedy, but she saw her mother drown. She is now in the custody of her aunt.

Valenciano crouched so he could look at Thea straight in the eyes as he sang.

Many people shed tears, including Dr. Nicholas Alipui, Unicef Philippine representative who was with Valenciano during the visit.

After the show, the singer and Alipui visited the mudflow site at Maipon.

"A lot of work needs to be done and I'm honored to do something even in small and big ways especially for my *kababayan* (countrymen)," Valenciano said.

Pobre said proceeds of his concert were donated to the Unicef for its relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Helping in the long-term recovery of Bicol will be a Unicef priority this year, said Alipui.

Unicef has turned over to the provincial government almost P10 million worth of relief items to typhoon victims in Albay since December.

Alipui said the agency had committed an additional $250,000 for the next three months to support the rehabilitation of schools, water-sanitation, recreational and sports facilities for children, and provisions for women's livelihood.

ROUNDUP

Prosecutor nabbed for shabu

CALUMPIT, Bulacan—Police on Monday arrested a Bulacan prosecutor after personnel of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency last month discovered a shabu laboratory in one of the houses in his family compound in Barangay Caniogan here. A house in the compound, according to the police, was rented by a group of Chinese from Prosecutor Cesar Santos and was used as a shabu laboratory. No suspect was arrested during the Dec. 22 raid here but PDEA agents found chemicals and equipment used in manufacturing the illegal drug. Santos was not in the compound during the raid. But Supt. Jesus Reyes, police chief here, said the agents arrested Santos on Monday after the latter arrived and asked policemen guarding the compound to leave. Reyes said Santos was taken to the PDEA office in Metro Manila. Santos, who was charged with obstruction of justice, had denied the charges.

Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

Negros wants hotel privatized

DUMAGUETE CITY—The provincial government plans to privatize the operation of the province-owned hotel and convention center that are ongoing construction in Barangay Taclobo here. The P130-million convention center would be completed before June. Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz placed the cost of the hotel project at P50 million. The province took out a loan to finance the construction of the convention center. The province's tourist attractions include dolphin and whale watching, underwater marine parks for scuba diving and eco-tourism activities.

Romy Amarado, Inquirer Visayas

Water reservoir for Iligan

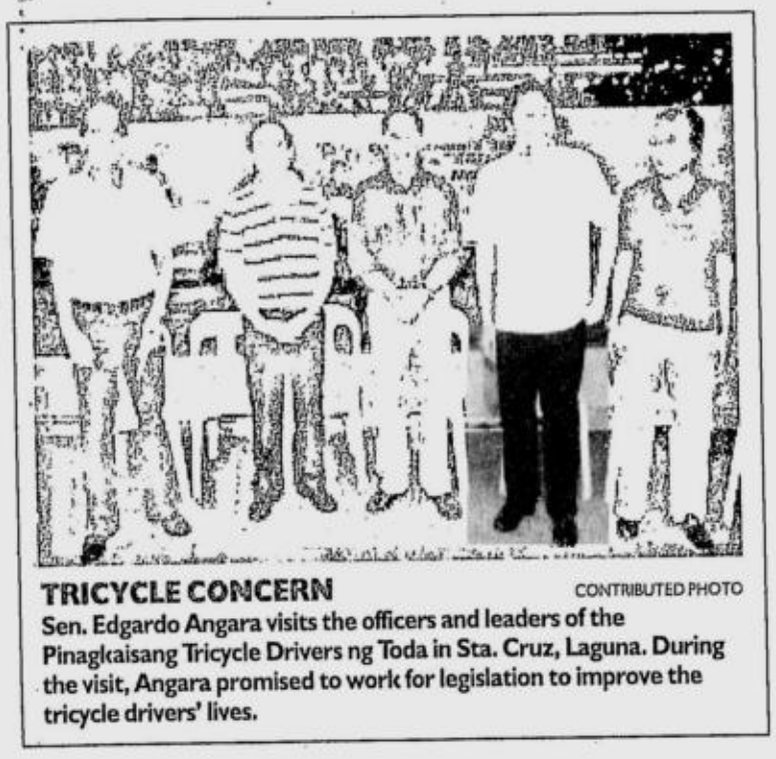
ILIGAN CITY—The water crisis hounding residents of at least five villages here was resolved with the construction of a P50-million water reservoir in Barangay Luinab, Mayor Lawrence Cruz said. The project was financed by the Development Bank of the Philippines. Cruz said the water reservoir has a 650,000-gallon capacity.

Ritchel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

3 rescued after 5 hours at sea

TABACO CITY—Three fishermen, whose motorized banca sunk Sunday night off Lagonoy Gulf, were rescued after about five hours in the sea, the police maritime group here said Tuesday. Police identified the survivors as Salvador Barbechu, 50, his son Mark Malagueño, 34, and nephew Allan Vargas, 37, all residents of Cabacongan, Camarines Sur. Senior Insp. Noel Versoza, chief of the 501st Maritime Police Station, said a certain Jeffrey Bradecina called for help at around 6 p.m. Sunday. Versoza said SPO2 Loreto Belison, team leader of the three-man rescue group, sped on a motor boat anchored at this seaport and proceeded to the sunken boat. Belison said big waves caused the boat to sink. The survivors were immediately brought to a hospital after their arrival here at around midnight.

Job Belen, Inquirer Southern Luzon



TRICYCLE CONCERN CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Sen. Edgardo Angara visits the officers and leaders of the Pinagkaisang Tricycle Drivers ng Toda in Sta. Cruz, Laguna. During the visit, Angara promised to work for legislation to improve the tricycle drivers' lives.

Saudi alerted on 'corrupt' Koran translation

COTABATO CITY—FILIPINO MUSLIMS have alerted the Saudi Arabian government about a "corrupted translation" of the Koran into the Maranao language.

The translation was made by a Sheikh Abdul Aziz Guroalim Saromantang.

The Saudi government, particularly the king, stands as guardian of Islam's Holy Scripture. The Koran could only be translated into a particular language when approved by the king.

Reached by phone, a spokesperson of the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Makati City said its in-house scholars composed of local Muslims and Arabs needed to go over the book before it could give official comment on the work.

Ustadz Muhammad Sulaiman, a specialist on the classic Arab language of the Koran, said he came across the questioned translation when a relative brought him a copy.

He said he immediately noticed a misleading line in the second chapter on the story of Moses.

Sulaiman said in a line in the Maranao translation, copies of which were distributed by Arab-looking men to Filipino pilgrims departing from the Jeddah International Airport during the annual *hajj*, Allah was described as a cow.

The error, he said, was "too serious" to ignore.

Sulaiman said the Maranao translation of the Koran's verses 68-69 reads: "Do you know who God is? He says, He indeed is a cow."

The verse, "al-Baqara" (The Cow), tells of Moses' receipt of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, during which the flock he left fashioned a golden cow and worshipped it.

THE COVER of Saromantang's Maranao translation of the Koran. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This act drove Moses to anger and cursed those who worshipped the image.

Badjury Mustapha, an employee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Mindanao, told the INQUIRER he received a similar copy.

He said he kept on reading the book that he thought could help him interpret the Koran in Maranao, a dialect he understood.

But he, too, came across the blasphemous verse.

Sulaiman said in the past, he also noticed erroneous translations of the Koran, particularly those posted in the Internet.

He cited one translation, which he said was virtually annotated with the phrase "which is" or i.e., to connote explanation on something, but which was actually misleading.

Sulaiman said one translation of a verse had the "i.e." in parenthesis with the words "Jews and the Christians" for the Arabic word Khafirun, which means "unbelievers."

He said the verbatim quote from Koran of the words "Christians" and "Jews" is "Nasrani" and "Yahudi" respectively.

A group of local *muftis* (jurists of Islamic law) also sought a copy of the Maranao translation so they could issue a collective *fatwa* (opinion) on the disputed *tafsir* (translation), said Ustadz Esmael Ebrahim of the Philippine Assembly of Muftis (PAM).

The PAM is working on the uniformity of Koran interpretation for mosque sermons as part of the *muftis*' peace campaign with the Canadian government-aided Local Governance Support Program for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (LGSPA).

Nash Maulana, Inquirer Mindanao

Work on ₱250-M sanitary landfill starts

BAYAMBANG, PANGASINAN—The proponent of the P250-million sanitary landfill project here has started site preparation work for the facility after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources granted the project its environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

Abelardo Palad Jr., president of the Waste Integrated Network Systems (Wins) Inc., said his company is now clearing the 33-hectare site in Barangay Dusoc here of "all possible disturbances" that may hamper its construction.

The project consists initially of three cells (an excavated area where garbage will be compacted), a leachate (liquid produced from decomposing wastes) treatment plant, a material recovery facility, a composting plant, an administration building, a motor pool, a weigh bridge, a wash bay, a generator house and guard houses.

"We have actually started to recruit and train personnel who will be manning the operations and management [of the sanitary landfill]," Palad told the INQUIRER.

The ECC, which was issued on Dec. 18 by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) regional office in San Fernando City in La Union, cited 18 conditions that Wins should comply with.

These include the use of soil or high-density polyethylene fabric sheets in covering wastes on a daily or weekly basis to prevent the trash from spreading or from being blown away.

"Run-off or rainwater from the surrounding elevated areas shall be diverted into a drainage ditch constructed along the perimeter of the landfill site to prevent [it] from entering the landfill cell," the ECC, which was signed by EMB regional director Joel Salvador, said.

It said gas vents must also be installed across the landfill area after the final cover shall have been put in place to allow generated gases to escape to the atmosphere.

"All leachates generated during the operation shall be contained in a specially designated leachate lagoon, with provisions for sufficient free board," the ECC said.

Palad said he did not see any problem in complying with the ECC conditions because he made sure that no law would be violated in the landfill's operation.

The facility was designed by Woodfields Consultants Inc., a Filipino-owned environmental engineering firm that will also build the project.

"By the end of March we will already be able to accept [garbage] delivery," Palad said.

Palad said under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, all open dumps should have been closed in February 2006.

"But the deadline was given some sort of extension up to the end of 2006. So by this month, there should already be a sanitary landfill in [every town]," he said.

Under the law, local government officials who fail to comply with and enforce the rules and regulations may be charged administratively.

But Palad said by entering into a memorandum of agreement with his company, local governments are deemed to have complied with RA 9003.

"That saves them the burden of still establishing a sanitary landfill because they already have this, which is better than what they will be putting up," he said.

He said at least 12 towns in Pangasinan and neighboring Tarlac have signified their intention to use the facility. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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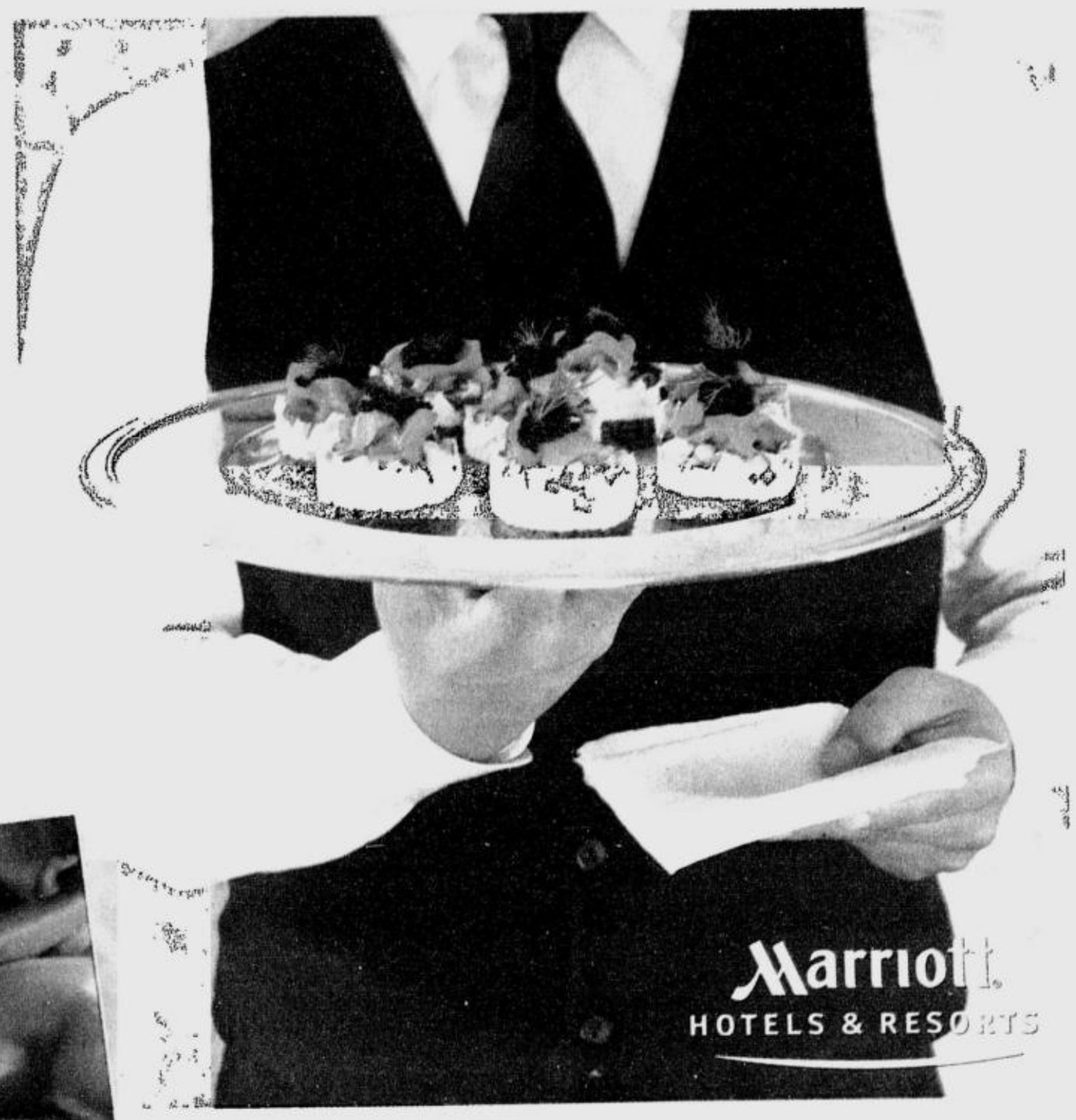

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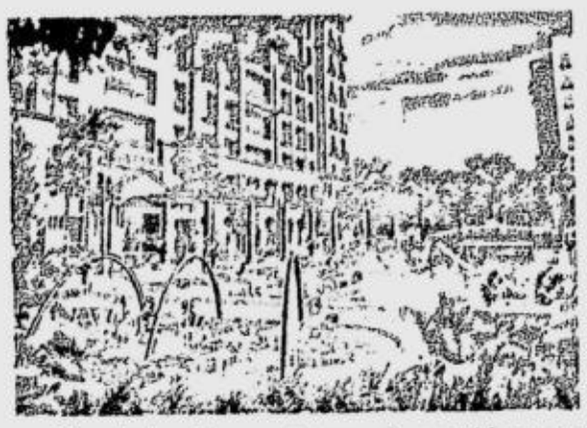

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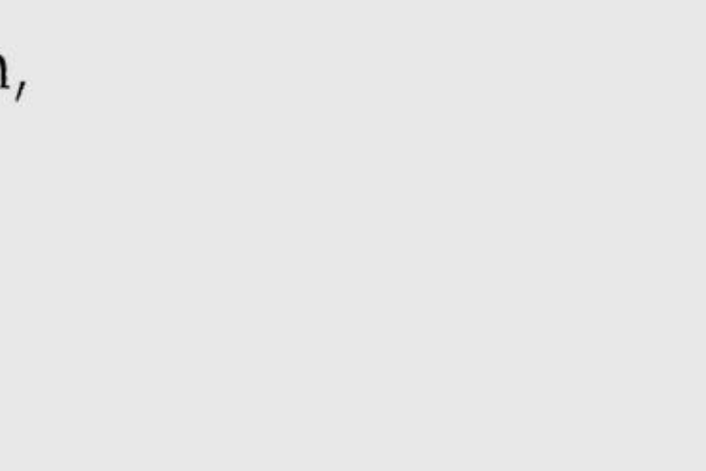

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In San Juan, politics is all in the family

Mayoral race could pit JV's mom against Jinggoy's wife

DENNIS SABANGAN

RUDY ESPERAS

JOAN BONDOC

THE RACE for the mayoral post in San Juan this May should prove to be interesting. Sen. Jinggoy Estrada is reportedly planning to field his wife, Precy (top, right) while his half-brother, JV Ejercito, the incumbent mayor (left) wants his mother, Guia Gomez (right) to succeed him. Both camps at this point, however, say that nothing is definite yet. INQUIRER FILE PHOTOS

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WILL THE ELECTIONS THIS COMING May further deepen the rift between Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and his half-brother, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito?

Ejercito is seriously considering running for senator next year.

But the family of his father, detained former President Estrada, is apparently not willing to let go of the small town they have ruled for almost half a century.

INQUIRER sources said Ejercito is grooming his mother, former actress Guia Gomez, to run for mayor in his stead. Ejercito is Estrada's son with Gomez.

However, there are also reports that Jinggoy, who served as San Juan mayor for nine years, is grooming his wife Precy as the next town mayor. Jinggoy is the former president's son with Sen. Loi Estrada.

Asked by the INQUIRER to verify the report, Jinggoy issued a terse reply, "Maybe or maybe not."

The rift between the half-brothers reportedly began when Ejercito fired Jinggoy's men when he took over as San Juan mayor in 2001.

Loi's six-year term as senator is expiring this year and JV is reportedly interested in running for the post. But there are reports that Lois is considering running for reelection.

Sought for comment, Ejercito confirmed he was seriously considering running for senator. His name has al-

IN SAN JUAN/ A18

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LTFRB mulls election ads ban for PUVs

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) is considering imposing a ban on the display of election-related materials, including campaign posters and stickers, in public utility vehicles (PUVs).

LTFRB chair Thompson Lantion, however, told reporters yesterday that he would have to talk first with the Commission on Elections before making the move.

Lantion said he wanted to know, in particular, whether his agency could ban campaign materials from being displayed in public jeepneys, buses and taxis.

In January last year, the LTFRB began prohibiting the display of advertising materials in PUVs. According to Lantion, campaign materials may also be considered as advertisements.

Several transport groups said the LTFRB has yet to consult them on the matter. Homer Mercado, president of the Provincial Bus Operators Association of the Philippines and Southern Luzon Bus Operators Association, said they have yet to discuss the ban with the LTFRB although the issue may be taken up in a meeting today.

But Bong Suntay, president of the Philippine National Taxi Operators Association, is against the ban. "Can't I put stickers or posters on my own taxis?" asked Suntay. The association president is seeking a seat in Congress.

The campaign period for senatorial candidates and political groups running for Congress under the party-list system will start on Feb. 13 and end on May 12.

Those running for posts in the House of Representatives or local government, on the other hand, may begin campaigning on March 30 until May 12.

Tabloid publisher dead in motorcycle mishap

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE PUBLISHER OF A WEEKLY tabloid was killed and his reporter slightly injured when the motorcycle they were riding on collided with a 10-wheel truck on Road-10 in North Bay Boulevard South, Navotas on Tuesday afternoon.

Dead on the spot was Joey Sacdalan, 46, publisher of the tabloid Headlines. His reporter, Roberto Illut, 38, suffered minor injuries.

According to Insp. Erwin de Guzman of the Traffic Enforcer Group, Sacdalan was killed when the motorcycle he was driving hit the truck and then slid underneath the vehicle. The truck then ran over him.

De Guzman said the truck and motorcycle were both traveling in the same direction.

He added that Sacdalan, who was on the right side of the road, slammed into the truck when he suddenly swerved to the left to avoid an approaching pedicab.

"He was instantly killed after his motorcycle skidded and went under the truck," De Guzman said.

Illut, who was riding tandem with Sacdalan, was slightly injured.

"He was able to jump from the vehicle before it went under the moving truck," De Guzman said.

The driver of the truck, identified as Pablito Gayangos Jr., 42, surrendered to the police.

He was charged with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide.

Max brought to Libingan ng mga Bayani

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DOVES TOOK FLIGHT WHILE WHITE balloons floated upward into the clouds when veteran journalist Maximo "Max" Soliven was laid to rest at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City shortly before noon yesterday.

"I feel pleased that Max's resting place is here ... because of his perpetual love for our country," said his widow, Preciosa after the interment rites.

Soliven, publisher of the Philippine Star, died on Nov. 24 due to complications arising from cardiopulmonary arrest at a hospital in Japan. He was cremated shortly after his death. He was 77.

His family initially wanted to bury him on Nov. 30 but this was postponed because of Supertyphoon "Reming."

Soliven was interred yesterday, which was also his father's death anniversary. "I am sure they are having a happy reunion up there now," Preciosa said.

A horse-drawn black caisson bedecked with white anthuriums brought the urn containing Soliven's remains, which were placed in a wooden casket, to his final resting place at the state cemetery's section for dignitaries, where he was accorded a hero's burial.

Some 300 relatives, friends and colleagues came to bid him goodbye. Among those present were Sen. Alfredo Lim, former senator and Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, his wife Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, journalist Cito Beltran and ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde.

Many were moved to tears when the UP Singing Ambassadors sang an a capella version of "Love is A Many Splendored Thing" as Soliven's shrouded urn was placed in the ground.

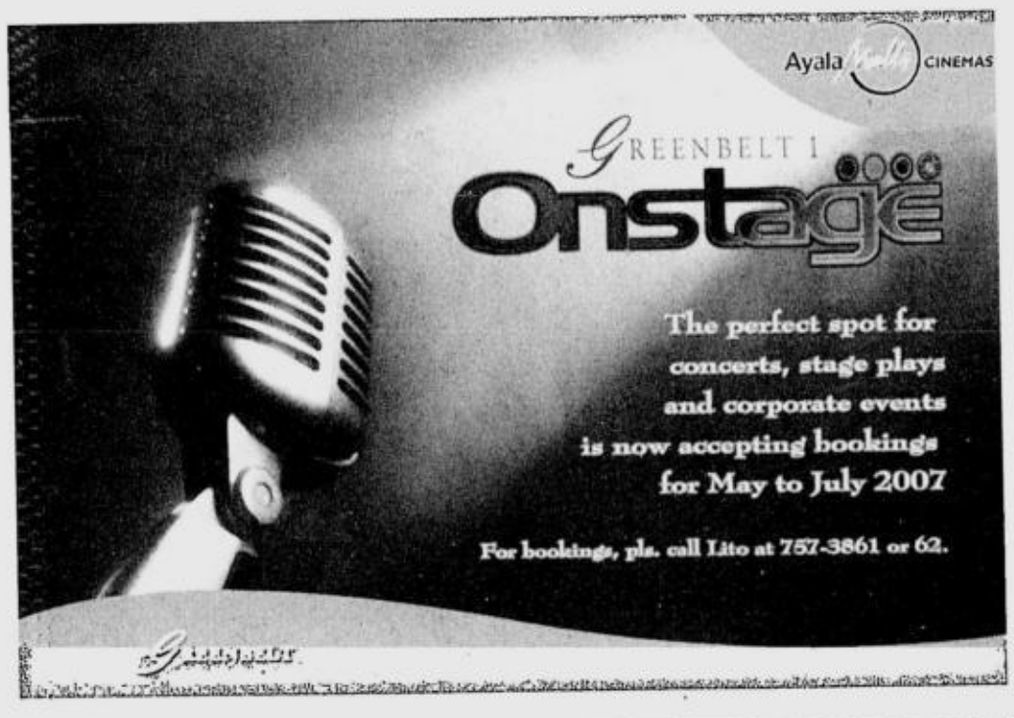
Teachers of OB Montessori, a school founded by Preciosa, then released balloons and doves into the air.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo talks with Preciosa Soliven, widow of Max Soliven, during yesterday's Mass for the veteran journalist held at St. Ignatius Chapel in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. LYN RILLON

"We always thought that when we had to go, we would be buried together at the OB Montessori. But this is a better place for him because he believed so much in journalism as a very powerful tool of persuasion for the nation," Soliven's widow said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who described Soliven as "an icon of freedom" and a "great loss to the journalism profession" attended the necrological Mass held at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City before the funeral.

Ms Arroyo conferred on Soliven the prestigious "Order of Lakandula" shortly after his death.



Corruption in high places in the AFP

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SOMEBODY GOT BACK AT FORMER Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Among barroom habitues, there's a saying: A wise monkey is one that does not monkey around with another monkey's monkey.

The next possible targets of this somebody are two former congressmen and two incumbent local officials.

* * *

President Macapagal-Arroyo says Perez is innocent of the graft and extortion charges against him set to be filed by the Office of the Ombudsman. The President exonerated her former justice secretary through Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

The charges against Perez and his wife, Rosario, and brother-in-law Ramon Arceo and business associate Ernest Escaler stemmed from an alleged $2 million bribery complaint filed by former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

With that exoneration, Perez can no longer file a petition for review with Malacañang since it appears to have already prejudged the graft and extortion case.

The Palace is the final arbiter of the petition for review of criminal cases before they are tried by the courts.

* * *

The INQUIRER featured on its front page for three days alleged corruption in the Armed Forces, from the way the arms modernization program is being handled, to the 40 percent slash in the monthly allowance of Filipino soldiers with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force.

Field officers—second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel—this writer has talked with say nothing will come out of the investigation that may be conducted as a result of the INQUIRER exposé.

There is restiveness among the lower ranking officers who blame the generals for the corruption in the AFP.

If ever there will be an investigation, it will just be for show, according to an Army lieutenant colonel who commands a battalion in Mindanao.

"Sir Mon, how can corruption be eliminated in the Armed Forces when corruption takes place in the high echelons?" says the officer.

There can never be an investigation because the generals themselves are allegedly involved in the irregularities.

Lieutenants and captains have staged a rebellion, now known as the Oakwood Mutiny, complaining of corruption in high places in the military. They have since been court-martialed.

The February 2005 coup attempt that was led by two generals was in protest over corruption in the military.

But the rest of the officers will never stage another coup because most of them, my sources say, are reportedly being paid off by high government officials themselves.

METROBRIEFS

Wrong move

A FATAL maneuver claimed the life of a young motorcycle driver early yesterday morning in Muntinlupa City when he lost his balance while overtaking the truck that eventually crushed him to death. Marlon Pagkalinawan Corate, 22, was driving his Honda motorcycle with plate number OZ 8092 on the westbound side of Sucat road in Muntinlupa, when he overtook a Fuso truck from the right at 8:30 a.m. yesterday. Follow-up investigator Andy Campo of the Muntinlupa Traffic Enforcement Unit said Corate might not have seen the pothole on the road, causing the motorcycle driver to lose his balance. "The truck was on the left, and Corate tried to overtake him from the right," added Campo. The victim then lost his balance and slid under the truck behind him. The-six wheeler truck with plate number UGM 653 was loaded with drinking water and driven by Virgilio Magallanes Ellano. Muntinlupa City police chief Police Supt. Jose Mario Espino said Corate slipped under Ellano's truck from the right side. "He was run over by the last right wheel of the truck. The impact injured several parts of his body and his head," Campo said.

Julie M. Aurelio

Body recovered

IT WAS a secret he thought he could keep six feet under. But with the help of a concerned witness, police yesterday arrested a 34-year-old man and his alleged cohort after he reportedly stabbed to death his live-in partner and buried her at the back of their house in Marikina City about three weeks ago. Police also recovered yesterday the body of the alleged victim in La Colina Subdivision, Barangay Fortune. Police chief Supt. Sotero Ramos said they arrested suspects Enrico Lacaba and Cayetano Navidad about 3:30 p.m. A third suspect remained at large. In a fit of jealousy, Lacaba allegedly stabbed to death his 39-year-old live-in partner Arlyn on Dec. 22, 2006 and then buried her near their house, Ramos said. An investigation was still ongoing as of yesterday afternoon after the victim's body was recovered .

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

DID YOU KNOW

IN THE ACADEMIC year 2005 to 2006, Metro Manila had 511 public elementary schools with over one million students and 206 public high schools with more than 600,000 enrollees. In the school year 2003 to 2004, there were 322 public and private institutions in Metro Manila with a combined enrollment figure of about 670,000 students. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

In San Juan, politics is all in the family

From page A17

ready been included in the senatorial slate of the United Opposition.

"But nothing is final yet," Ejercito quickly said in a phone interview, adding he might still run for reelection. But he confirmed that in case he runs for senator, he would probably leave the town in the hands of his mother.

Estrada began his political career as mayor of the small town in the 1960s. Jinggoy was vice mayor before he took over the post in 1992. Jinggoy went on to serve as mayor for three consecutive terms.

When Jinggoy ran and won as senator in 2001, he was succeeded by Ejercito. In 2004, Ejercito ran unopposed when he sought reelection.

The rift between the half-brothers also became evident when they supported different candidates in the last San Juan polls. Jinggoy, however, did not put up a candidate for mayor and expressed his support for Ejercito.

Ejercito supporters said having Gomez replace her son would ensure the continuity of his policies and projects in the town.

In past press conferences, Ejercito had bragged about his achievements. He said that from 9,000 registered businesses in 2001, the number grew to 27,974 in his five years as mayor. He also cited a Commission on Audit report which ranked San Juan as the municipality with the highest gross income in 2005 with P658.8 million.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Democrats to oppose US troop buildup

WASHINGTON—DEMOCRATIC LEADERS IN the US Senate were preparing legislation on Tuesday opposing what they called an "escalation" in the Iraq war as the new Democratic-led Congress flexed its muscles against the unpopular conflict and President George W. Bush.

Bush is expected to announce an increase of about 20,000 US troops in Iraq in a speech on Wednesday, but Harry Reid of Nevada, the Senate's top Democrat, said Americans, as well as some military commanders, opposed any increase in forces.

Reid said he was examining proposals by several senators—including one Massachusetts Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy made on Tuesday to block a boost in troops—before deciding what to bring to the Senate floor, possibly as early as next week.

The important thing was to produce something that could pass the narrowly divided Senate with support from both parties, Reid told reporters outside the Senate.

"We believe that there are a number of Republicans who will join with us to say no to escalation," Reid said, adding that at least nine of 49 Republicans in the 100-lawmaker chamber opposed a troop increase.

"I really believe that if we can come up with a bipartisan approach to this escalation it will do more to change the direction of the war in Iraq than any other thing we could do," Reid said.

Congress passed a resolution authorizing the Iraq war in October 2002. Since then, the war has taken the lives of more than 3,000 US soldiers, and Democrats rode growing public unhappiness with the conflict to majorities in both houses of Congress in November elections.

Reid and House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California have urged Bush to begin bringing US troops home soon. And growing numbers of Republicans are expressing unease about the war.

One Senate Republican who joined critics of the war late last year, Gordon Smith of Oregon, said on Tuesday he was "very open" to Kennedy's proposal.

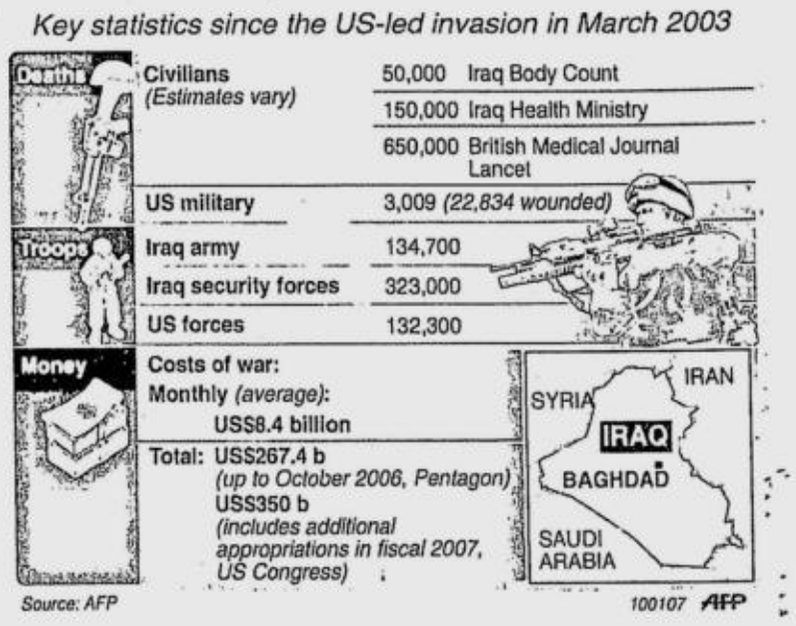
John Boehner, of Ohio, the House Republican leader and a strong supporter of Bush on Iraq, said he wanted to hear from the president how any new strategy would move the US closer to bringing its troops home from a successful mission.

"Every American wants to bring our troops home, and Republicans believe we must begin this process as we achieve our strategic objectives and strengthen regional security," he said.

But plans for reacting to Bush's strategy with floor action were not as advanced in the House. "The House will vote on the president's proposal," a spokesperson for Pelosi said, but added that she did not know what the timing or content of that resolution would be. *Reuters*

Iraq in numbers

Key statistics since the US-led invasion in March 2003

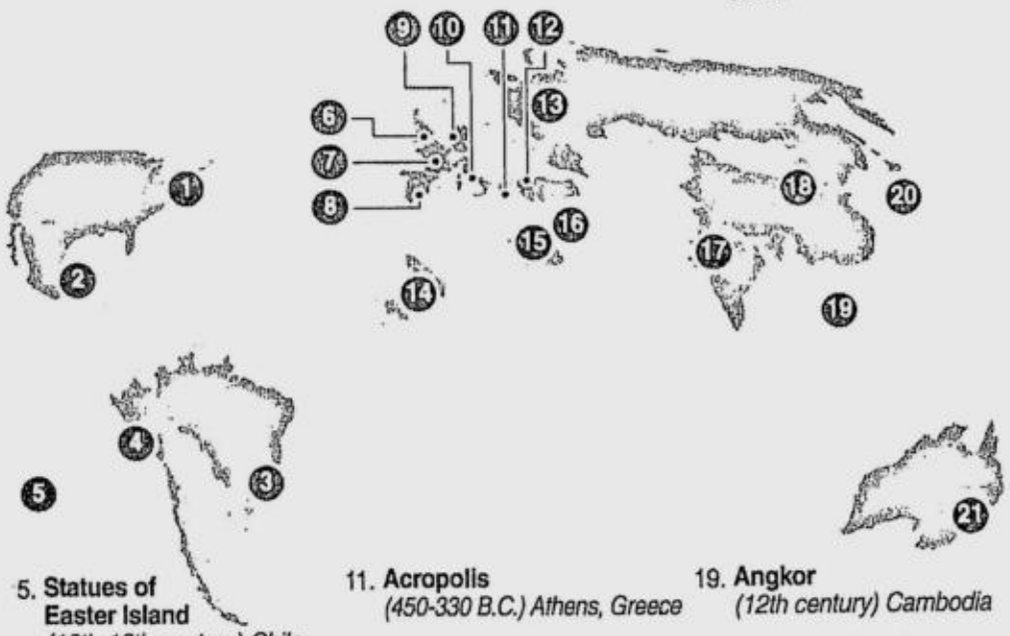


WONDERS OF THE WORLD

The New Seven Wonders of the World will be announced during the official declaration ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal on July 7, 2007

The 21 Finalist Candidates

1. **Statue of Liberty** *(1886) New York City, U.S.A.*
2. **Pyramid at Chichen Itza** *(before 800 A.D.) Yucatan, Mexico*
3. **Christ Redeemer** *(1931) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*
4. **Machu Picchu** *(1460-1470), Peru*
5. **Statues of Easter Island** *(10th-16th century) Chile*
6. **Stonehenge** *(3000 B.C.-1600 B.C.) Amesbury, U.K.*
7. **Eiffel Tower** *(1887-1889) Paris, France*
8. **Alhambra** *(12th century) Granada, Spain*
9. **Neuschwanstein Castle** *(1869-1884) Fussen, Germany*
10. **Colosseum** *(70-82 A.D.) Rome, Italy*
11. **Acropolis** *(450-330 B.C.) Athens, Greece*
12. **Hagia Sophia** *(532-537 A.D.) Istanbul, Turkey*
13. **Kremlin** *(1156-1850) Moscow, Russia*
14. **Timbuktu** *(1100) Mali*
15. **Pyramids of Giza** *(2600-2500 B.C). Egypt*
16. **Petra** *(9 B.C.-40 A.D.) Jordan*
17. **Taj Mejal** *(1630 A.D.) Agra, India*
18. **Great Wall of China** *(220 B.C./1368-1644 A.D.) China*
19. **Angkor** *(12th century) Cambodia*
20. **Kiyomizu Temple** *(749-1855) Kyoto, Japan*
21. **Sydney Opera House** *(1954-73) Australia*



Source: www.new7wonders.com Estudio R. Carrera para REUTERS

New US air strikes hit Somalia

MOGADISHU—SOMALIA SAID THE US had launched fresh air strikes on suspected al-Qaida targets in the south of the country on Tuesday, amid international criticism that they risk further destabilizing the lawless Horn of Africa nation.

A Somali defense ministry official said at least two US helicopters gunships struck targets in the same area where a US AC-130 rapid firing aircraft had pounded two villages the previous day.

The Pentagon on Tuesday acknowledged that attack, but declined to confirm the Somali claims of the second attack, indicating US forces were not involved.

Somali village elders said at least 19 civilians had been killed in Monday's AC-130 attack on two villages in Somalia's southernmost tip—Badel and Aayo.

Pentagon spokesperson Bryan Whitman said the operation was prompted by "credible intelligence that led us to believe we had principal al-Qaida leadership in an area where we could identify them and take action against them." "We are going to remain committed to reducing terrorist capabilities when and where we find them," he said. "The operation two days ago was an example of that." A Somali defense ministry official told AFP the fresh attack Tuesday by at least two helicopters "was aimed at destroying the command and control facility of the terrorists."

The US military intervention—its first in Somalia since the early 1990s—followed an offensive by Ethiopian-backed Somali government forces that routed Islamist fighters who Washington accused of harboring senior al-Qaida operatives. *AFP*

UN resolution slams Burma junta

UNITED NATIONS—THE UNITED States on Tuesday introduced a revised draft resolution in the UN Security Council urging Burma's (Myanmar) rulers to initiate democratic reforms, release all political prisoners and stop using rape as a weapon of war.

But Russia and China, two fellow veto-wielding members of the 15-member council, immediately questioned the need for the text—even though it does not call for sanctions—insisting that they did not view the situation in Burma as a threat to regional peace and security.

The text, a slightly amended version of a draft first submitted by the US delegation last month, expresses "grave concern that the overall situation in Burma has deteriorated and poses serious risks to peace and security in the region." It calls on Burma's military government "to begin without delay a substantive political dialogue which would lead to a genuine democratic transition, to include all political stakeholders, including representatives of ethnic nationality groups and political leaders." *AFP*

Chavez move rattles marts in Venezuela

CARACAS—INVESTORS DITCHED Venezuelan holdings on Tuesday, shattering stock values and undermining the currency as they fled President Hugo Chavez's promise of nationalizations, a vision that also drew a US rebuke.

Financial markets reeled from the anti-US leader's speech on Monday in which he vowed to use his new six-year term to intensify his socialist drive by seeking more powers from Congress, nationalizing major firms and ending central bank autonomy.

The Opec nation's stock market lost almost a fifth of its value, debt prices tumbled to a six-week low and the currency changed hands at nearly twice the official exchange rate.

"He is behaving like a despot, speaks like a despot and governs like a despot," said opposition leader Manuel Rosales, who accuses Chavez of seeking to create a Cuban-style centralized economy run by a single-party.

Emboldened by his landslide reelection last month, Chavez said on Monday he would nationalize the Caribbean state's largest telecommunications company CANTV and unspecified electricity firms.

He also reiterated his threat to take over foreign-run energy projects in the fourth biggest crude exporter to the United States. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

31 dead in Iraq plane crash

ANKARA—Thirty-one people were killed on Tuesday when their chartered plane crashed in Iraq while trying to land in foggy conditions, Turkish officials said. The officials made no suggestion of hostile fire, although an Iraqi rebel group later claimed it had shot down the plane. The Moldovan Antonov-26, which took off from the Turkish city of Adana early on Tuesday, was carrying about 35 people including 30 construction workers, the officials said. Adana's governor Cahit Kirac told CNN Turk television that the plane was carrying 29 Turks, one American and a crew comprising one Russian, one Ukrainian and three Moldovans. *Reuters*

9 South Koreans kidnapped

PORT HARCOURT—Gunmen stormed a compound housing expatriate pipeline workers in Nigeria's oil-rich south on Wednesday, kidnapping nine South Koreans and a Nigerian, officials said. Dozens of Nigerian soldiers and security guards at the complex failed to foil the latest in a spate of kidnappings to hit the restive region, said Ekiyor Wilson, a government spokesperson in the region. South Korea's Daewoo Engineering and Construction confirmed that employees who had been working on a gas pipeline were taken hostage and said it was so far unclear what the abductors were demanding for their release. *AP*

50 killed in Baghdad battle

BAGHDAD—Iraqi security forces backed by US troops killed 50 militants in fierce clashes in central Baghdad Tuesday, as a grisly new video of Saddam Hussein taken after his hanging appeared on the Internet. A barrage of mortar and machine-gun fire reverberated across central Baghdad from early morning as security forces launched a crackdown on Sunni insurgents in Haifa Street, less than 2 km from the heavily fortified Green Zone — the seat of Iraq's government and the US embassy. "The clashes between insurgents and security forces left 50 insurgents dead while another 21 were arrested including Arab nationals," Iraqi defense ministry spokesperson Mohammed al-Askari told AFP. *AFP*

Russia, Belarus oil row intensifies

MOSCOW—European countries faced continued disruption to their oil supplies Wednesday after talks failed to end an oil transit row between Russia and Belarus that threatens relations between Moscow and the EU. Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that Western consumers must be spared the effects of disrupted supplies after German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned the crisis was destroying confidence in Moscow. *AFP*

METRO

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- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

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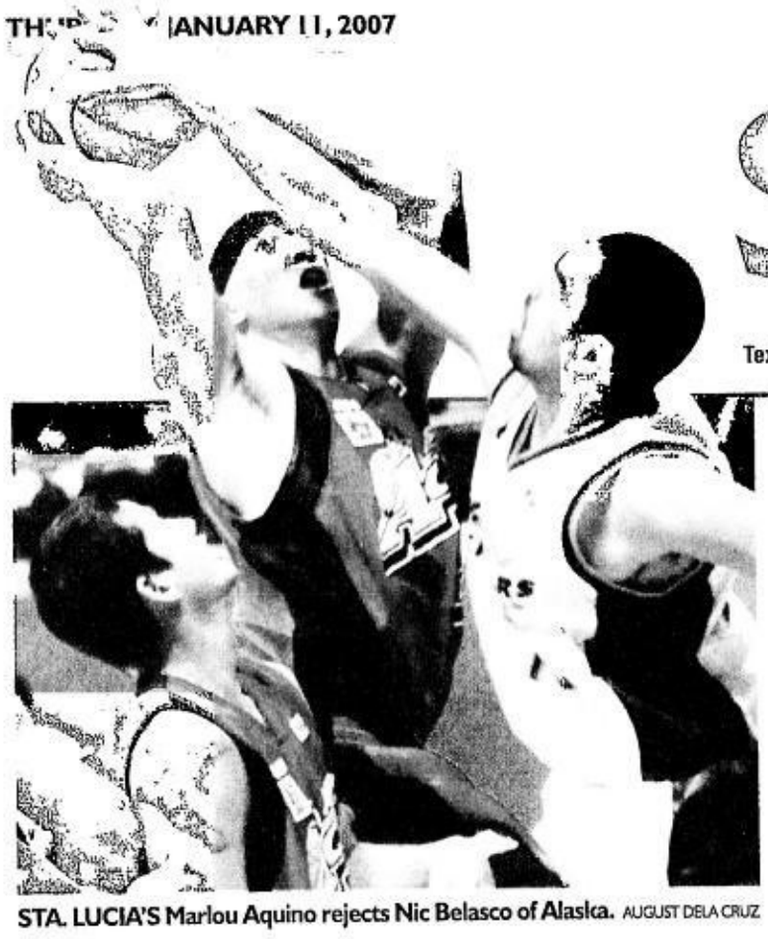

STA. LUCIA'S Marlou Aquino rejects Nic Belasco of Alaska. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Express gain playoff

Forge battle for quarterfinal slot vs Realtors

By Musong R. Castillo

AIR21 FORMALLY AVAILED OF THE WILD-card incentive in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup last night, but not after almost blowing a 32-point lead and holding on for a 111-106 victory over Coca-Cola at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

The Express jumped out of the gates hard and survived a sputtering finish to sweep all of their three assignments in the wild-card phase and gain a shot at making the quarterfinal round via the backdoor.

Air21, despite losing starting center Yancy De Ocampo to a one-sided trade before the Holidays, bamboozled all its foes in this round, even the Realtors whom they clash with on Friday at

EXPRESS/ A22

Pacquiao: Barrera rematch 'still alive'

PACQUIAO

BARRERA

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor

MANNY PACQUIAO has not completely shut the door on a possible rematch with World Boxing Council super featherweight champion.

The Filipino ring icon assured WBC president Jose Sulaiman, who called him up last Tuesday, that he is still interested in fighting Barrera, whom he stopped in the 11th round of their non-title bout in San Antonio, Texas in 2003.

A source privy to the telephone conversation that also involved Filipino boxing promoter Rex "Wakee" Salud said Pacquiao wanted promoter Bob Arum to raise to $3 million the money he offered to Barrera recently.

Arum originally offered Barrera a $2.5 million purse to stake his title against Pacquiao during a Manila press conference where the Filipino officially confirmed the head of Top Rank as his new promoter.

Following the three-way teleconference, Pacquiao and Sulaiman talked privately, the source added. The Filipino superstar refused to divulge what was discussed except to say that the Barrera fight was main topic.

Sulaiman's call came on the heels of Barrera's announced March 17 fight with Juan Manuel Marquez and Pacquiao's planned April 28 bout in Macau, China.

Apparently, the WBC is in a bind. It has to decide between stripping Barrera of the WBC title for failing to defend against mandatory challenger Pacquiao and sanctioning the Barrera-Marquez fight as a WBC title defense.

The WBC decided during its last convention that the winner of the Pacquiao-Erik Morales "Grand Finale" will become the mandatory challenger to Barrera.

Observers say the WBC is also faced with the problem of determining whether Barrera refused to fight Pacquiao in a mandatory defense or the Filipino did not want to fight the Mexican.

Earlier, the WBC had scrapped a purse bid scheduled today for the Pacquiao-Barrera rematch, saying that it has yet to do "more research" on the matter.

Erik, wife attending Jinkee's b-day bash

MEXICAN RING ICON ERIK MORALES, HERE on vacation with wife Andrea on the invitation of a Filipino friend, will fly to Gen. Santos City on Friday for the birthday celebration of Manny Pacquiao's wife Jinkee.

The Moraleses and childhood friend Jorge Quezada will be accompanied by Pacquiao himself when they leave for GenSan on a private jet owned by a sponsor, a source said.

"Pacquiao and Morales seem to be getting closer now, and there is no trace of animosity between them unlike when they duked it out in the ring," the source added.

Also slated to fly to GenSan on Friday is renowned American trainer Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's adviser Rex "Wakee" Salud and lawyer Jeng Gacal. ***Salven Lagumbay, Contributor***

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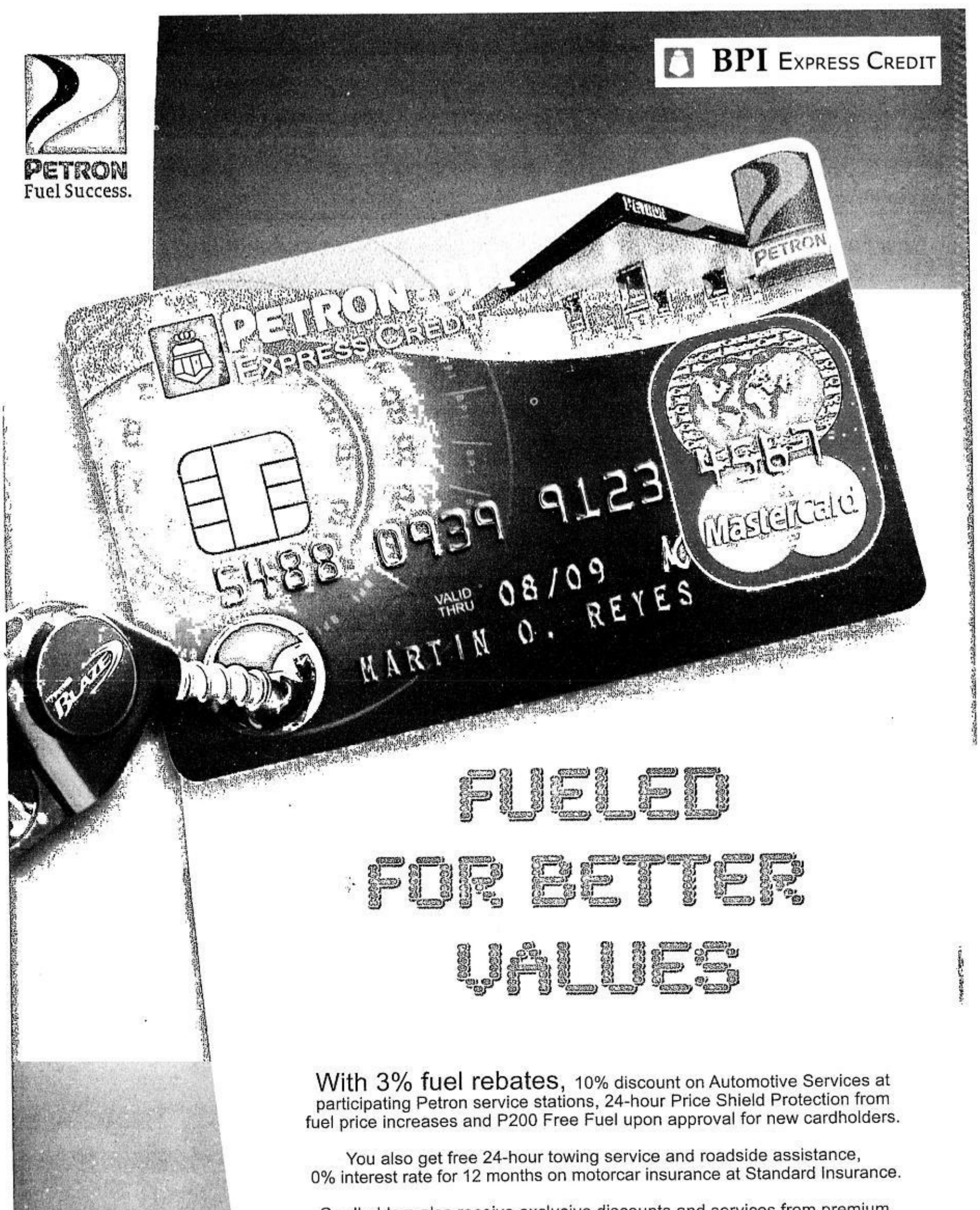

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Senate may summon BAP officials, says Jinggoy

By June Navarro

A SENATE INVESTIGATION ON WHY THE Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) continues to resist a concerted effort to form a unified cage body may just be conducted soon.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada has floated the idea of calling BAP officials to a Senate hearing after his attempt at uniting the sport was derailed when the association dumped him as its president recently.

"The Senate can investigate anything under the sun, including the BAP," said Estrada in a talk with sportswriters at his residence in San Juan Tuesday night.

"I will take care of them (BAP officials)," he added with a grin.

Estrada, as head of BAP, had earlier forged an agreement to serve as chair with telecommunication magnate Manny V. Pangilinan as president of Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP)—which merged the BAP and the major stakeholders of the sport who organized themselves into a group known as Pilipinas Basketball (PB).

The creation of the SBP was in accordance with a pact between the BAP and PB in August last year in Japan which the international basketball federation (Fiba) had set as requirement for the eventual lifting of its suspension on the country.

But the BAP said it was not consulted when Estrada forged the deal with Pangilinan and fired the man it earlier declared as "the very able replacement" for Joey Lina, who resigned as president of the organization.

Pangilinan announced at a recent press conference that the SBP would continue its mission to unify the sport even without the BAP, which ceased to be the national association for basketball following its expulsion from the Philippine Olympic Committee in 2005.

The PLDT big boss was tapped to head the three-man panel which created the SBP and crafted the constitution and by-laws of the new organization along with Lina and then PB president Bernie Atienza.

Atienza has since been replaced by Jun-Jun Capistrano of the UAAP.

Subjecting a sports organization to a Senate inquiry is nothing new.

Philippine Basketball Association officials were once investigated by the Senate on the issue of players who took drugs and the presence of players in the league with fake Filipino roots.

Once Estrada pushes the inquiry, the BAP issue will be tackled by the Senate committee on games, amusement and sports chaired by Sen. Lito Lapid.

The BAP executive board, which had temporarily installed vice president Christian Tan as president, has yet to make a move to rejoin the three-man panel and comply with the Fiba directive forged in Tokyo.

Pangilinan continues to hold hope that the country would be able to compete in international tournaments again this year.

"In Fiba's most recent letter by (secretary general) Mr. (Patrick) Baumann to me last November, it acknowledges that the SBP still exists, that we have to sort out our own situation and come back to him (Baumann) when we are ready," said Pangilinan.

ESTRADA: Anything under the sun

Game-fixing stuns Pichay

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

AN EARLY MORNING call from an associate last Tuesday prompted me to immediately set an interview with national chess federation president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay that same day.

"Have you heard what transpired last night," asked my associate who has an inside track in the chess organization.

Replying in the negative, my source told me that the Surigao congressman had summoned all the top chess players to his Batasan office that day.

"Pichay had heard reports of rampant game-fixing activities in chess and he was hell bent on getting to the bottom of it. I'm sure the meeting was aimed at getting confessions from players suspected of involvement," he disclosed.

These illegal activities, he said, had been going on for years, way before Pichay took over the presidency of the organization early last year.

The congressman must have been horrified to learn that many chess players, including some ladies, were involved in game-fixing.

* * *

Under intense questioning, one of the woodpushers broke down and confessed, my source added.

Now everyone is certain, most important of all, the congressman, that the persistent reports are true after all. There was indeed rampant game-fixing in chess tournaments, with players selling points by deliberately losing matches in order for "point buyers" to move a step ahead in the standings.

Pichay was "super angry," the source said. For him, it was an act of treachery. He couldn't believe that after everything he had done for the players and the organization, he would be repaid this way.

During the initial inquiry, Pichay learned that game-fixing was controlled by a small group of players. He couldn't believe what he was hearing because some of the player-suspects were very close to him.

The following day, some of the suspects left for Vietnam to compete in the Asian Zonals.

* * *

Butch certainly looked fresh and well rested when I met him that afternoon at a coffee shop near the Batasan. There was absolutely no trace of the emotional turmoil he experienced the night before.

I told him I heard about what happened that night. I asked him what steps he was taking to punish the offenders.

Definitely, there was going to be due process, he said.

"We will conduct a full-blown investigation. The games of each and everyone will be reviewed, and those found guilty will be punished accordingly," he said.

How did he stumble on these activities?

"I am not stupid!" he replied. "I've known all about these and I already warned them at the last tournament."

* * *

In spite of the setback, which Butch said has caused deterioration in the performance of some players, he is more determined than ever to forge ahead and pursue his goals for chess.

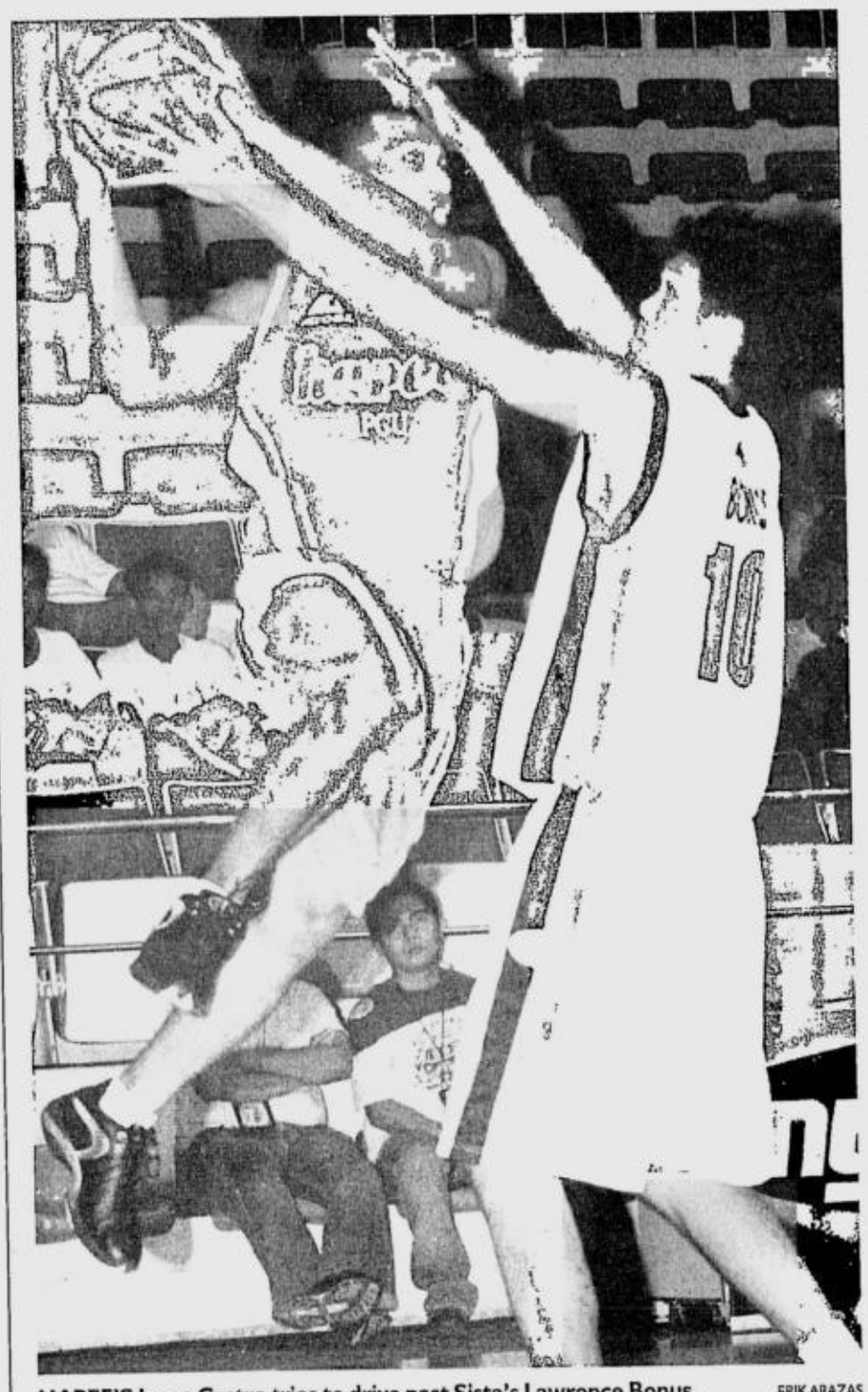
He sincerely believes that the country has world-class players.

"Chess is a mental game. We don't need height, bulk or anything except brains to excel here. I know our players are very, very good. We are now No. 37 in the world rankings. My goal is for us to get to the top 25 before 2007 is over," said Butch, who admits that chess has now become an obsession to him and a big challenge as well.

His ultimate dream is to guide the RP teams to the world's top 10.

"In chess we can be world champions. Do you know *na kinatatakutan tayo* internationally because of our unorthodox style, which often doesn't have a bookline?"

Pichay expects Filipinos to battle for the titles in the Vietnam competition.



HAPEE'S Jason Castro tries to drive past Sista's Lawrence Bonus. ERIK ARAZAS

Hapee takes on winless Kettle Korn

ONE TEAM IS TRYING to arrest a three-game slide, while the other is desperate to score its first win.

That's how dire the situation is between Hapee Toothpaste-Ph ilippine Christian Unversity and Kettle Korn-UST when they collide in one of the two matches today in the 2007 PBL Silver Cup at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym.

The Teeth Masters, losers of their last three games after winning their first five outings, tackle the winless King Pops (0-8) in the 2 p.m. game.

"I've talked to my players and hopefully we can break our slump," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Noel. "We just have to play solid defensively. We tend to relax in the end that's why we lost our last three games."

Cebuana Lhuillier Pera Padala and Magnolia Ice Cream battle at 4 p.m. with both teams trying to move up in the standings.

STANDINGS	W	L
Mail & More	7	2
Henkel Sista	6	3
Harbour	5	3
Toyota Otis	5	3
Hapee-PCU	5	3
TeleTech	4	4
Pera Padala	3	5
Magnolia	2	6
Kettle Korn	0	8

GAMES TODAY (*EAC gym*)
2 p.m.—Kettle Korn-UST vs Hapee-PCU
4 p.m.—Magnolia Ice Cream vs CL Pera Padala

The Moneymen, toting a 3-5 record, will try to get through the quarterfinal round after losing their chance to make it to the semifinals outright.

Kenneth Bono, the UAAP MVP, will spearhead Pera Padala, while NCAA rookie-MVP awardee Sam Ekwe will banner Magnolia in what is expected to be a battle royale in the shaded lane.

The top two teams after the classification round make it straight to the semis, while the No. 3 and No. 4 teams move into the quarterfinals with twice-to-beat incentives against two qualifiers from the knockout stage.

Teams from 5th to 7th spots will mix it up in the knockout phase along with the survivor of the duel between the No. 8 and No. 9 teams.

University of the East standout Mark Borboran is expected to lead the Teeth Masters. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Express gain playoff

From page A21

the Cuneta Astrodome.

A 122-99 demolition job of the Realtors Friday last week touched off an impressive streak for the Express, who wound up with a 10-11 card, while closing out the Tigers' campaign with a 6-15 tally.

Red Bull will be the best-of-five foe awaiting the winner of the Air21-Sta. Lucia KO match. Talk 'N Text and Purefoods are the teams in the other pairing.

Mark Telan scored 21 points and grabbed a career-high 19 rebounds to lead three others with double doubles for the red-hot Express.

Meanwhile, the pre-season tournament champion Alaska Aces bowed out in style earlier after surviving the loss of a 16-point lead for a 99-91 nipping of Sta. Lucia.

The Aces finished their campaign with a 9-12 card overall after going 1-2 in the wildcard phase.

The Realtors, meanwhile, were led by Alex Cabagnot's 19 markers with super rookie Kelly Williams finishing with a career-low five markers after going 1-of-13 from the field.

The Scores:
First Game

ALASKA 99—Cariaso 17, Ferriols 16, Miller 15, Dela Cruz 12, Hugnatan 11, Aban 10, Belasco 9, Thoss 4, Singson 3, Juinio 2, Bajar 0.

STA. LUCIA 91—Cabagnot 19, Duremdes 17, Aquino 11, Mendoza 10, Omolon 7, Bughao 6, Isip 6, Williams 5, Gonzales 4, Catli 3, Calimag 3.

Quarters: 27-22, 47-45, 72-70, 99-91.

Second Game

AIR21 111—Telan 21, De Ocampo 19, David 16, Arboleda 15, Santos 11, Canaleta 11, Dimaunahan 8, Sotto 4, Billones 4, Andaya 2, Bernardo 0.

COCA-COLA 106—Peek 22, Arigo 20, Misolas 14, Miranda 12, Pacana 9, Caceres 9, Salangsang 9, Yeo 7, Ferreria 4, Gavino 0.

Quarters: 24-23, 58-40, 82-72, 111-106.

The Dawn, six other bands set to rock PSA Awards

SEVEN OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP BANDS WILL PERFORM during the post-event party of the SMC-PSA Annual Awards on Jan. 18 at the Entertainment Hall of the SM Mall of Asia.

San Miguel band The Dawn will rock the house after the 3 p.m. awards proper along with Mojofly, Rocksteddy, Join the Club, Dream Kitchen and Pancake 80.

The Dawn is expected to render its signature song "Salamat," which has been a long-time anthem of San Miguel Beer, in honoring the top athletes who did the country proud in the past year.

Renowned concert organizer Sazi Cosino directs the show.

The musical party complements the formal awards rite where eight of the country's top sports figures, led by boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao, will be honored as the PSA's Athletes of the Year for 2006.

Pacquiao shares the top honor with pool stars Efren "Bata" Reyes and Ronnie Alcano, bowler Biboy Rivera and Asian Games gold medalists Joan Tipon, Violito Payla, Antonio Gabica and Rene Catalan.

The PSA Bayani ng Lahi Award will also be conferred on Pacquiao for the sheer impact of his two sensational knockout victories against legendary Mexican warrior Erik Morales.

"This year's SMC-PSA Annual Awards features a first-ever post-event party that will have a lot of singing and dancing," said PSA president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya. "The awardees and guests are going to have fun."

Apart from the eight Athletes of the Year, seven others will be honored with the Major Awards by the country's oldest media organization.

PACQUIAO: "Bayani"

YAP: Mr. Pro Basketball

Included in the Major Awards list are Purefoods hotshot James Yap (pro basketball), Kenneth Bono of Adamson (amateur basketball), Juvic Pagunsan (pro golf), Dottie Ardina (amateur golf), Santy Barnachea (cycling), jockey Jonathan B. Hernandez (horseracing) and Real Spicy (horseracing).

The first three Filipino mountain climbers—Leo Oracion, Pastor Emata and Romy Garduce—to reach the peak of Mt. Everest will be bestowed the President's Award while the Tony Siddayao Award, given to athletes who showed promise at a young age, will be given to golfers Cyna Rodriguez and Mia Legaspi and chess wizard Wesley So.

Leading the individuals and entities receiving citations in the annual rites are the silver and bronze medalists in the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Two of the country's top figures in chess are also to be cited. Former World Chess Federation (Fide) president Florencio Campomanes is this year's Lifetime Achievement awardee while Asia's first Grandmaster, Eugene Torre, will be elevated to the PSA Hall of Fame.

Top American breeders among early pacesetters

THE BIGGEST AMERICAN NAMES IN THE field joined the leaders with two points each after the first day of the National Cockers' Association World Championship Derby at the jampacked Pasay City Cockpit on Tuesday.

Joe Wolcott and Larry Whitehead led the tournament along with Rep. Butch Pichay, Rep. Iggy Arroyo, William Go, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, former Sen. Ramon Revilla, Bebot Uy, Rudy Albano, Edwin Abella, Georgie Antonio, Boy Marzo, Ricky Valencia, Manny and Armand Santos and the entry D Saints.

The second day of the derby kicks off tomorrow with organizers advising cockfight enthusiasts to get into the venue early.

Two more Americans, Tommy Cooper and Jeff Hudspeth, and the entry GB Bullet Mar 1 trail the leaders with 1.5 points.

Scoring 1 point each were the entries Riverside, JM Tulsa, SJC Intl Jan. 22, 24, 26, RT 114, ASJU Firefly 9, Magsi Laban sa Pasay, Cristina Red Creek, Blood of Spartans, BJ, Joe Firefly 14, Binangonan Sundance, Binangonan Silang, IKA, Super Pacman SSF, Wildwing Sundance II, BST Wildwing Sundance, Pasay Cockpit, Zabong, Sagupaan Complexor 3000 Selectrogen SSF, PATL Winning Line Ready to Fight SSF, and Sagupaan Hammer.

80 fights at LPC today

SMALL-TIME COCKERS AND BACKYARD breeders from Las Piñas, Parañaque, Pasay, Cavite and Laguna collide today in the "Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan" which gets going today at the Las Piñas Coliseum. The first of more than 80 fights starts at 12 noon. Some 160 entries will see action today, according to host Angel Tenedero who pegged the entry fee at P1,650. A guaranteed prize of P30,000 awaits the fastest-win champion after every 10 fights. The LPC special 3-cock derby hosted by Eddie Alejandro is up next on Saturday with 35 confirmed entries. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910.

Milo Checkmate clinics up

THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF MILO CHECKMATE Saturday- and Sunday-only clinics at St. Francis Square (SFS), behind SM Megamall A in Mandaluyong City, begins at 10 a.m. this Saturday.

HALL OF FAME

Ripken in; McGwire fails to get voters' OK

NEW YORK—BASEBALL IRON MAN CAL Ripken Jr. of the Baltimore Orioles and eight-times batting champion Tony Gwynn of the San Diego Padres were elected into baseball's Hall of Fame Tuesday, but slugger Mark McGwire was snubbed by voters.

Ripken, the shortstop/third baseman who surpassed Yankee Lou Gehrig's record of 2,130 games before ending his streak of consecutive games played at 2,632, received 537 votes.

That was 98.5 percent of the total cast in balloting by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Gwynn, whose batting titles tied him for the National League record with Honus Wagner, received 532 votes for 97.6 percent.

"What a great day," Gwynn said in a teleconference call. "It's great to know that people appreciated what you did."

RIPKEN AP

The vote also served as a referendum on players caught up in steroid allegations. Mark McGwire, the prodigious home run hitter who once owned the single season home run record, failed to win election in his first year on the ballot.

GWYNN AP

McGwire, who belted 70 home runs in 1998 to become the first player to reach that mark, appeared on fewer than 25 percent of the record 545 ballots cast.

McGwire, who has never tested positive for steroids, refused under oath to answer questions about steroid use during a US Congressional hearing on the subject.

MCGWIRE REUTERS

Candidates needed to be named on 75 percent of the ballots to gain entry into the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Gwynn said he was disappointed that McGwire had failed to be voted in.

"I think this is a case of people making a statement about the congressional hearings (rather) than about what he did on the baseball field," Gwynn said. "[A] guy like Mark McGwire deserves to be in the Hall of Fame."

Ripken, who at 6-foot-4 helped usher in an age of power-hitting shortstops before he shifted to third base later in his career, played 21 seasons for Baltimore. He belted 431 homers, drove in 1,695 runs, had 3,184 hits and played on 19 American League All Star teams.

"It's a wonderful moment right now, a wonderful feeling," he said, calling his election "an extention of a boyhood dream." *Reuters*

Carter powers Nets past former team

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—VINCE CARTER scored 32 points against his former team to guide the New Jersey Nets to a 101-86 home victory over the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday and into first place in the weak Atlantic Division.

New Jersey (15-19) took a half-game lead over Toronto (15-20), with all five teams in the division still well below the .500 mark.

Carter registered his points before leaving the game late in the fourth quarter when he was poked in the eye by Anthony Parker.

However, he caused plenty of damage before then, going 12-for-23 from the field and adding seven assists and five rebounds.

Jason Kidd, who earlier in the day filed for divorce from his wife of 10 years, contributed 10 points, 14 assists and eight rebounds for the Nets, who are a poor 11-10 at home this season.

New Jersey shot 50 percent from the field and held the Raptors to just 38 second half points to beat Toronto for the second time in three meetings to date this season.

Richard Jefferson added 21 points for the Nets and Mikki Moore scored 12 for the winners, who have four wins in their last five games despite battling a number of injuries.

Toronto slipped to 5-15 on the road this season and got most of its production from its bench players.

No. 1 draft pick Andrea Bargnani led with 22 points, while Jose Calderon added 16 points and 12 assists and Morris Peterson added 15 points for the losers.

Grizzlies rip Lakers

In Memphis, Tennessee, Pau Gasol and the lowly Memphis Grizzlies again got a boost from a meeting with the Los Angeles Lakers.

Gasol collected 26 points and 13 rebounds and Mike Miller added 25 points as the Grizzlies used a high-scoring third quarter to key a 128-118 victory over the Lakers and end a two-game skid.

Damon Stoudamire scored 16 points for the Grizzlies, who improved to 3-3 under interim coach Tony Barone.

The Grizzlies have had a lot of success against the Lakers in recent years, winning eight of their last nine contests, including six of seven at home.

On Tuesday, Gasol showed glimpses of his All-Star form, dominating the paint with a variety of post moves as Miller provided support from the perimeter.

Memphis took control in the third quarter when they outscored Los Angeles 46-22. Miller scored 14 points in the period on 6-of-8 shooting.

Kobe Bryant scored 25 points for the Lakers, who shot just 42 percent and saw their season-high four-game winning streak end.

Mavericks score

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Dirk Nowitzki scored 38 points and got some needed support from his Dallas teammates Tuesday as the Mavericks beat Utah, 108-105.

Josh Howard added 21 points for the Mavericks, who bounced back from Sunday's 101-98 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers that snapped a 13-game winning streak.

In a crisp shooting game, the clubs sparred for nearly 44 minutes before Nowitzki's teammates waxed hot.

Devin Harris and Jason Terry each made two free throws that gave Dallas a 102-97 lead with 2:38 to play.

After Nowitzki knocked down a perimeter jumper, Terry drove the lane for a layup and a 106-101 lead with 1:41 left. Utah's Deron Williams cut the deficit to three with a reverse layup and, after a few empty trips by each club, Erick Dampier came out of nowhere to block Williams' driving attempt with 13 seconds left.

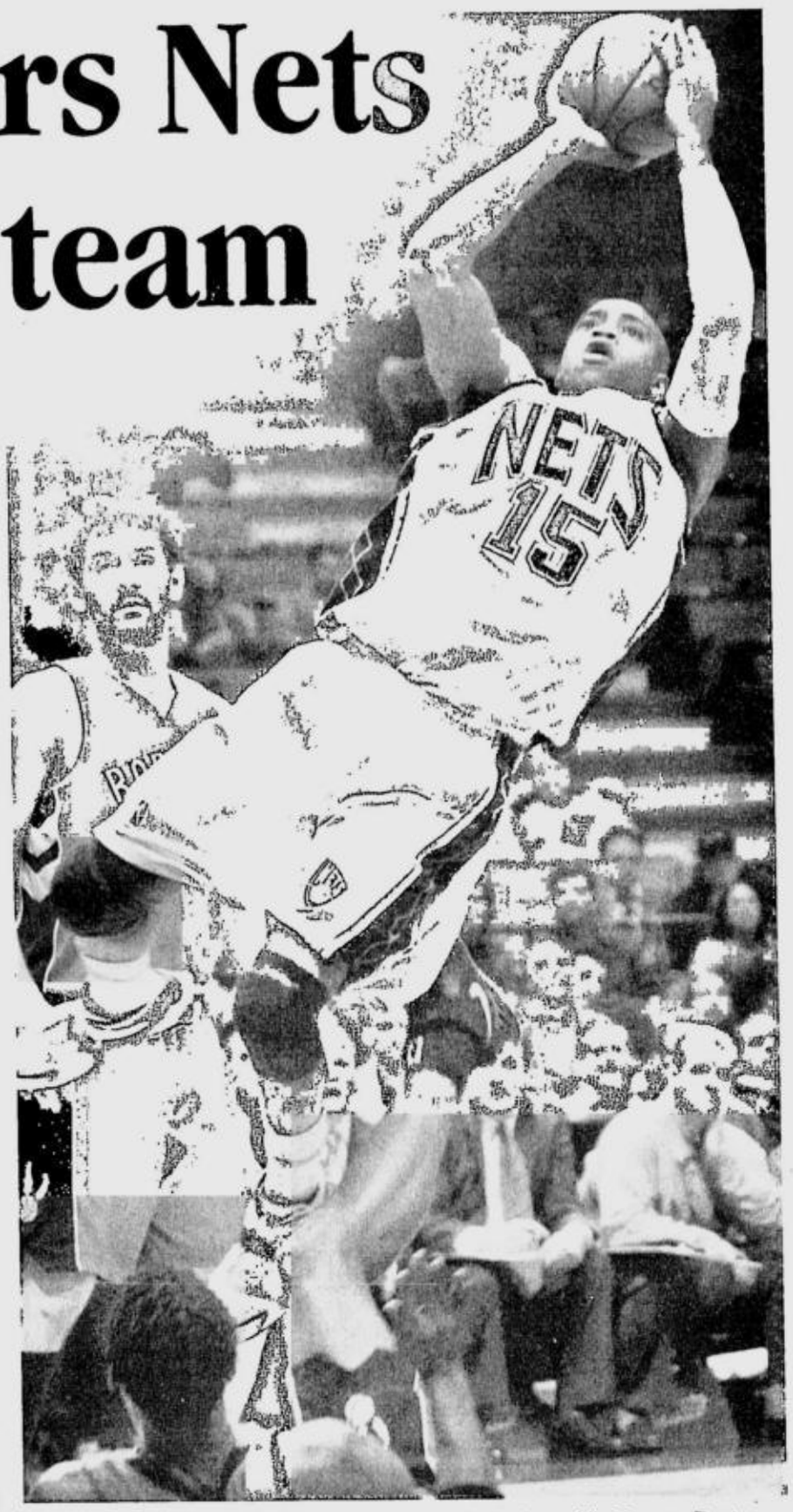
Nowitzki hit two free throws with 10 seconds left for a 108-103 lead before Utah's Carlos Boozer scored and the Jazz got the ball back. But after a timeout, Mehmet Okur missed a 3-pointer with three-tenths of a second left.

Suns continue rise

In Phoenix, Shawn Marion had 29 points and 15 rebounds, Steve Nash added 27 points and 11 assists, and the Suns beat the fading Seattle Supersonics, 113-102, for their seventh consecutive victory.

The Suns overcame career bests of 29 points and 21 rebounds by Seattle's Nick Collison to hand the Sonics their fifth loss in a row and 12th straight defeat on the road, two shy of the franchise record.

Leandro Barbosa scored 10 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter for Phoenix. Ray Allen scored 25 for Seattle. *AFP, Reuters, AP*



VINCE CARTER hangs in midair as he attacks the basket while Toronto Raptors forward Jorge Garbajosa watches helplessly. AP

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Indiana 91, Atlanta 72; Detroit 98, Philadelphia 89; New Jersey 101, Toronto 86; Memphis 128, LA Lakers 118; San Antonio 98, Portland 84; Dallas 108, Utah 105; Phoenix 113, Seattle 102; Cleveland 108, Sacramento 98

• NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV

9 a.m.—Toronto vs Milwaukee (replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

Jankovic boots out Mauresmo

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—TOP-SEEDED Amelie Mauresmo was upset in the quarterfinals of the Sydney International on Wednesday and Nikolay Davydenko, seeded No. 2 in the men's draw, became the fifth high-profile player to retire from the Australian Open warmup tournament.

Mauresmo, who won the Australian Open last year for her first Grand Slam singles title, lost, 7-5, 6-0, to Serbia's Jelena Jankovic in the quarterfinals.

She had replaced No. 1-ranked Justine Henin-Hardenne as the top-seeded player in Sydney after the Belgian withdrew from this year's Australian events for undisclosed personal reasons.

Jankovic upset fifth-seeded Martina Hingis in the first round and beat Australia's Samantha Stosur, 6-2, 7-6 (2), in the second and is now on an eight-match winning streak after winning the ASB Classic title at Auckland last week.

Mauresmo made 38 unforced errors and dropped serve six times, losing for the first time in five head-to-heads with Jankovic.

"I'm just disappointed about the way I feel—there is a lot of work to do in my game and physically," Mauresmo said. "I would have loved to play one or two more matches."

Davydenko lost the first set 6-4 to Paul-Henri Mathieu of France before he retired due to pain in his right foot. He said he would travel to Melbourne for medical tests and assess his condition before next week's Australian Open.

He said it was better to be cautious than play through an injury in the week before a Grand Slam.

It was another blow for the Sydney tournament after top-seeded Rafael Nadal pulled out with a groin injury on Tuesday. *AP*

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Mr. Victory (6), Tigres in Action (5), Lucky Joe (1), Hakuna Matata (2)

Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Ultra Rose (5), Penny Wise (4), Platinum Garden (3), Olive Tan (1)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—War Bird (5), Modern Spirit/Silent Operator (7), Be My Pride (3), Hazit Coming (6)

Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Detective daryll (7), Play It Again (3), Lovable Trisha (2), Morning Nell (4)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Ingay Ingay (10), Elusive Quality (11), Boss Lady (7), Kumpirmado (9), Queen Jospehine (4)

Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Virginia (3), Anahita (2), Arctic Desert (7), Circulation (1)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Revelation (3), Strong Jays (9), Yoshiwara (1), Blue Shiekh (4), Lady Cathy (5)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Mischievous (9), Awesome Power (8), Royal Rose (5), Mary Jane Bomb (11), Kalashnikov (4), Prophet (2)

Federer struggles; Roddick, Safin march on

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—ROGER Federer shook off some rust in a 7-6 (2), 6-7 (4), 7-6 (5) win over Radek Stepanek in a belated start to the season Wednesday that took longer and was hotter than he anticipated.

Stepanek almost ambushed Federer in the first round of the Kooyong exhibition tournament.

After saving match point in the second set, Stepanek led 5-2 in the third-set tiebreaker.

But the top-ranked Federer rallied and won the next five points to finish off in almost 2 hours, 20 minutes as the temperature peaked above 35 Celsius at Kooyong, the former Australian Open venue in the leafy suburban outskirts of Melbourne.

Federer next plays Marat Safin, who beat Argentina's David Nalbandian 5-7, 6-1, 6-2, in his return to the eight-man round-robin.

Nalbandian later withdrew because of knee soreness and was replaced by Fernando Gonzalez of Chile.

SAFIN AP

Defending champion Andy Roddick beat Tommy Haas, 6-2, 6-3, a day after discovering that he would likely be without coach Jimmy Connors at next week's Australian Open because Connors' mother had died in the United States.

Roddick's next match is Friday against Scotland's Andy Murray, who beat Ivan Ljubicic 6-4, 6-2. Ljubicic beat Murray in the Qatar Open final at Doha last week.

Federer has started the previous two seasons with wins at Doha, but decided to skip that tournament this year to recharge after compiling a 92-5 record and winning 12 titles in 2006.

"Playing such a long match gives me a lot of information for what I could do better, and what's already in place," Federer said. "Concentration is the biggest factor. It's kind of tough to get into things entirely."

Federer said he felt better prepared mentally this year to defend his Australian Open title. Despite the shaky start, he backed his decision to skip Doha.

"You have to look at the big picture—I needed a break," he said. "I also wanted to have a life—have Christmas and New Years' and take it easy a little bit. For me, it was most important to come Melbourne in the mood to win the Australian Open, not feel like it's a pain." *AP*

FEDERER: I needed a break AFP

THE JET Racing squad celebrates with its trophies after the awarding ceremony.

Pinoy karters pocket top Macau race trophies

THE JET RACING TEAM RAISED THE Philippine flag high in Macau following its impressive finish of two titles and three runner-up plums in the final round of the 2006 Asian Karting Open Championship at the Kartodromo Race Circuit.

Team captain Javin Benitez, a Grade 6 student of Xavier School, highlighted the run with an amazing rally from the back of the 36-man field to clinch the overall Rok Junior runner-up crown.

Also making waves for the Jet Racing Team were Franco Reyes, Christian Gaddi, Vencer John Suba and Renz Pazcoguin.

"I must admit I'm also surprised [at how they performed] against their more experience rivals," Jet racing coach Elson Cario said. "They don't race like this in the local races."

"We'd like to thank Albee Benitez who has given all out support in our thrust to develop these young kids into world caliber karters," he added.

Reyes and Gaddi scored a 1-2 finish in the Cadet 60 class. Reyes was really determined to wind up his bid with a bang as he took the pole in all three heats to emerge the overall Cadet 60 champion.

Gaddi checked in second in the pre-final heat and wound up fourth in the final race to secure the Cadet 60 overall runner-up trophy.

Pazcoguin emerged the overall Mini-ROK champion.

VJ Suba was also up for the same title but problems with his kart setup hounded him throughout the three-day event. Still, he gave it all he got to earn a respectable finish and still claim the Mini-ROK overall runner-up plum.

However, it was Benitez who became the instant darling of the crowd with his impressive performance. A nasty dive by the karter behind him sent him out of the race and had to start 32nd out of 36 karters in the final race.

But he blazed from the back, passing one karter to another and ended 11th in the final race which was enough to salvage the overall runner-up. He even posted the fastest laptime of 51.163 which was far better than the time of 51.5 seconds posted by older and more experienced rival Rio Harynato of Indonesia, who emerged the ROK Junior champ.

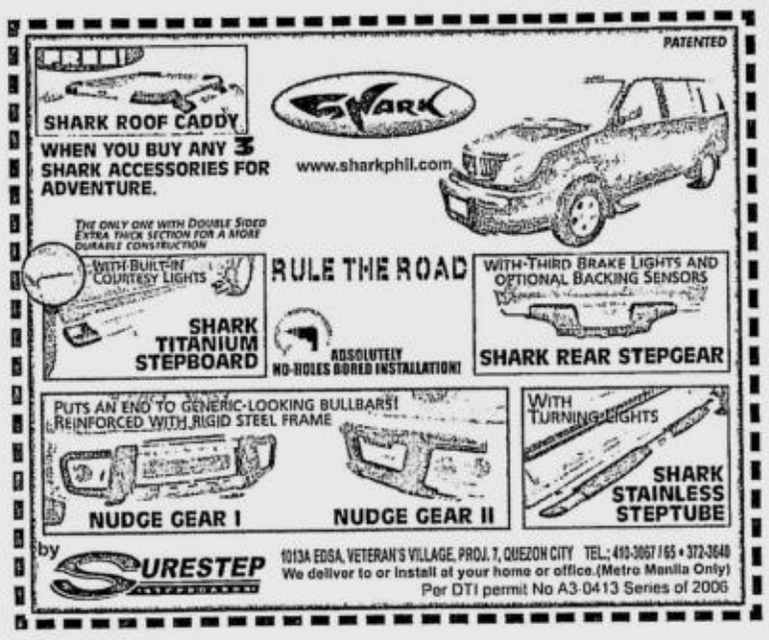
Guest Jet Racing driver Tyson Sy also created quite a stir in the said prestigious event. Coming off from the 32nd spot, he instantly passed five karters at the first turn and ended 11th overall against the world best drivers in the Formula-A class.

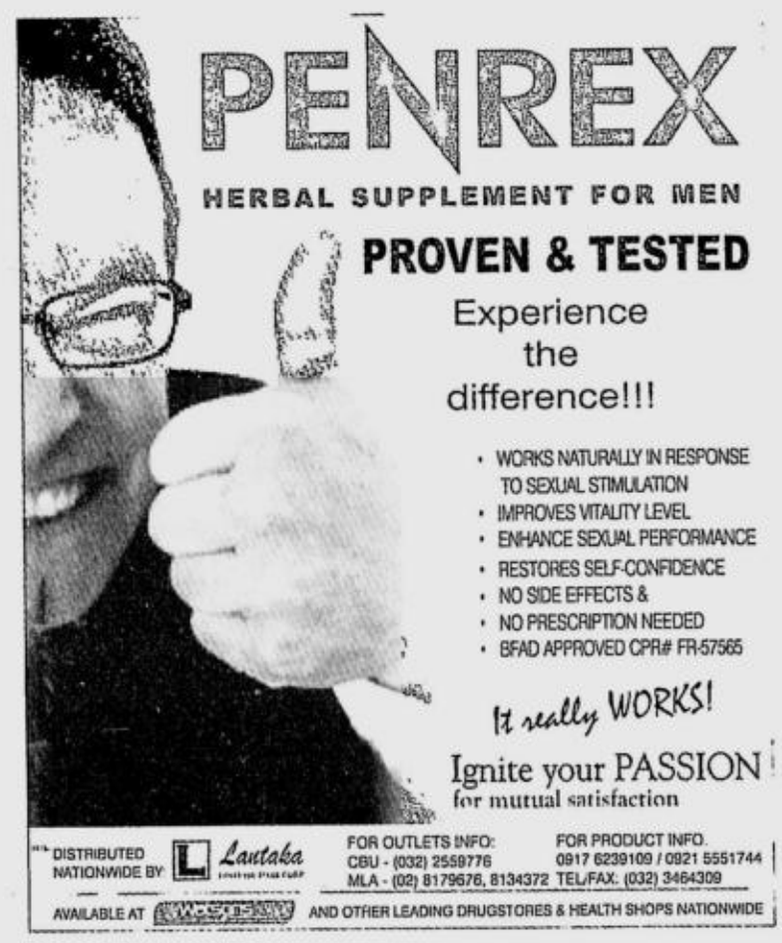
"It's the biggest haul by any Filipino Team in Asian Karting and I'm proud of what the boys achieved," said Carpio.

The team was backed by Bingo Bonanza Corp., Henry Sy Jr. of SM companies and Willy Ocier of Pacific Online Systems Corp. and Belle Corp.

SPORTS

Zonal gets going; Paragua top seed





TOP-SEEDED MARK PARAGUA AND VETE-rans Rogelio Antonio Jr. and Eugene Torre spearhead the Philippine challenge when the Asian Zone 3.3 chess championship gets going today at the Phu Quoc, Kien Giang province in Vietnam.

With his Elo of 2573, Paragua is the highest rated among the 41 players in the nine-round Swiss tournament based on the Jan. 1 report by the FIDE (International Chess Federation).

GM Antonio is seeded fourth with an Elo of 2551 behind IM Wynn Zaw Htun (2566) of Myanmar and GM Dao Thien Hai (2559) of Vietnam.

The 55-year-old Torre, Asia's first GM who reached the World Championship quarterfinals in 1982, is seeded fifth with his Elo of 2547.

Teen sensation GM-candidate Wesley So, winner of the Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr.-National Open chess tournament held at the SM City Manila last month, is seeded 14th with an Elo of 2451.

Five other Filipinos—GM Nelson Mariano II (Elo 2422), IM Oliver Dimakiling (2481), IM Darwin Laylo (2476), IM Ronald Dableo (2453), NM Julius Joseph de Ramos and unrated Leo Daylo—are also seeing action.

Dableo ruled the 2003 Asian 2.3a Zonals held in Vietnam with Paragua coming in second.

Aside from Wynn and Dao, the Filipinos' strongest rivals are GM Nguyen Anh Dung, the 2001 Manila Asian 3.2a Zonals titlist; GM Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son and GM Le Quang Liem.

Seven players, led by Catherine Perena, are competing in the women's division. Perena is seeded sixth behind top seed WGM Bathuyaag Mongontuul of Mongolia and four Vietnamese players.

TORRE: Out to make it to next level this time.

PARAGUA: Top seed with highest Elo rating.

Perena has an Elo of 2227.

WFM Sheerie Joy Lomibao (Elo 2183), WIM Beverly Mendoza (2182), Sherily Cua (2061), Kimberly Jane Cunanan (1968), Jedara Docena (1957) and Christy Lamiel Bernales have also been sent by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines headed by Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr.

The top twom men placers will earn the right to represent Asia Zone 3.3 to the 2007 World Championship and the women winner will qualify for the Women's World Championship.

Torre narrowly missed a slot in the 2005 edition held in Malaysia, placing third behind GM Utut Adianto of Indonesia and Paragua.

"I hope I would get it this time," said Torre, before his departure on Tuesday. "I'm ready, both physically and mentally, thanks to the support I've been getting, particularly from my company."

Torre is now the vice-president of Fianchetto Construction Corporation, a company engaged in townhouse development.

"We are all behind Eugene in his quest to bring more pride and honor to our country" said Fianchetto president Manuel Luis Iligan. NM Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Bata, Orcollo take 1-pocket openers

REIGNING TITLIST EFREN "BATA" Reyes and Ring Game champion Dennis Orcollo led the Filipinos' charge in the One Pocket division of the 2007 Derby 2007 Derby City Classic event yesterday at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky.

Reyes, ruler of the One Pocket event since 2004, routed Daryl Gabe while Orcollo, carrying over the form that netted him the Ring Game title on Tuesday, bested American Brian Gregg as they joined three other Filipinos in the win column.

Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Jose "Amang" Parica, Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat and Santos Sambajon also beat their respective rivals.

Bustamante downed Chris Szuter, Parica nipped Jim White, Luat trounced Steve Titus, while Sambajon dumped Buddy Hall.

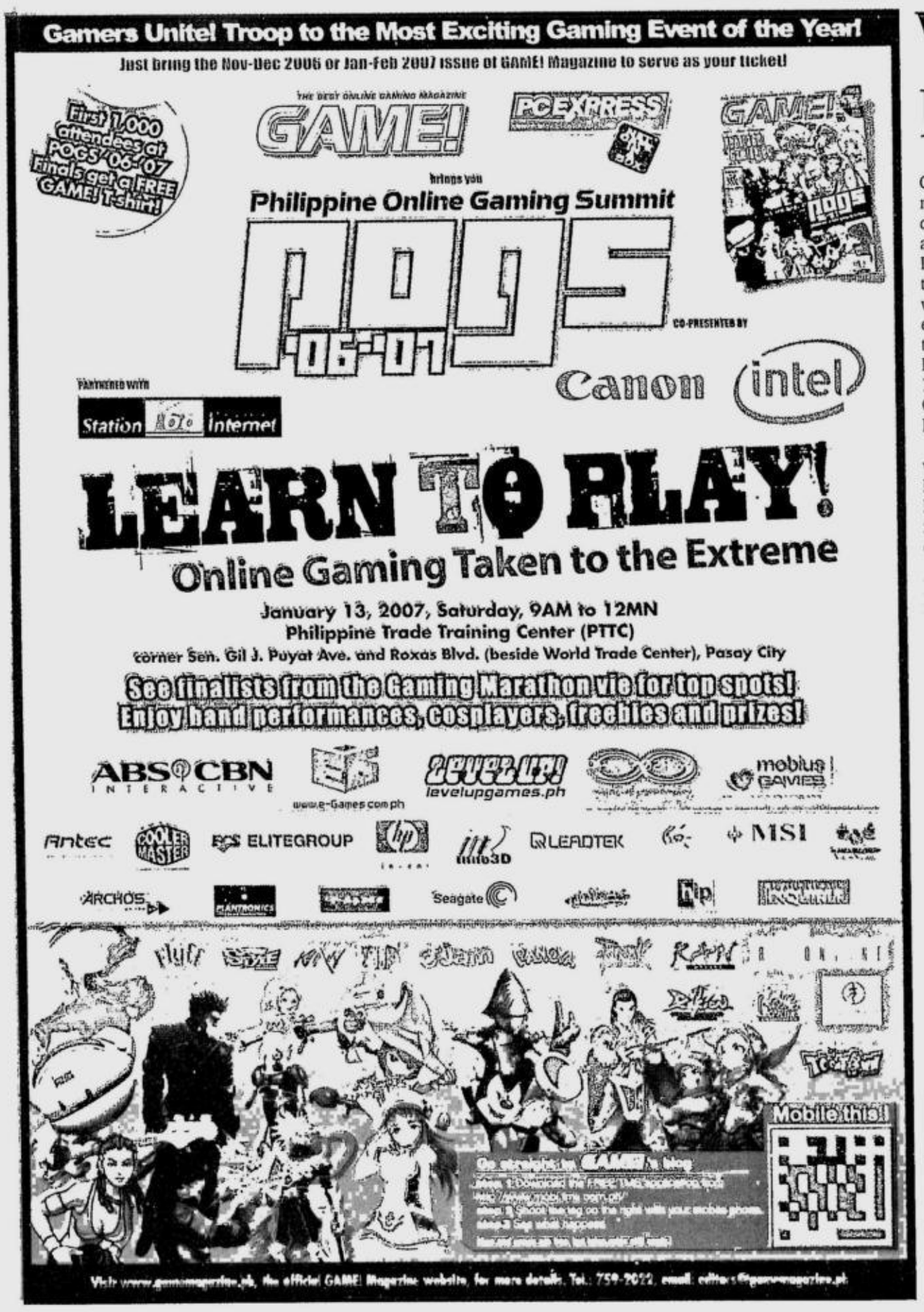
The 27-year-old Orcollo, the acknowledged Philippine money game king, blasted Jon Hennessee, Sparky Ferrel, Richie Orem and former US Open champion Corey Deuel en route to the Ring Game crown.

Three other Filipinos—Alex Pagulayan, Gandy Valle and Lee Vann Corteza—dropped their first One Pocket matches.

Pagulayan, the 2004 World Pool champion, bowed to Jack Fernadez while Corteza, the 2006 All Japan Championships winner, yielded to Joey Aguzin. Valle, Orcollo's stablemate at Bugsy's promotions, lost to Ken Kerekes.

Despite their initial setbacks, Pagulayan, Corteza and Valle remained in the running through the one-time Buy-In option, which allows losers to go to the next round by paying $75 each in the event.

"Since his loss in the 9-ball Banks Game, Dennis has been on a roll," said Orcollo's benefactor Perry Mariano. "Let's hope he can sustain his momentum." *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*



Villaroman, Ardina hot RP Ladies Open favorites

CARMELETTE VILLAroman seeks a major double, Dottie Ardina aims for a record and Debbie de Villa hopes to resuscitate her game when they lead the foreign-flavored cast for the ICTSI-Philippine Ladies Open on Jan. 17-19 at exclusive The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

VILLAROMAN

ARDINA

After coming up with a surprise win at Manila Golf last year, De Villa suddenly lost her form. She is still looking to regain her confidence as she defends the crown against young aces and veterans.

Villaroman and Ardina, finalists of the recent Philippine Amateurs held at the same course, rank high among the favorites in the 45th edition of the 54-hole event organized by the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines and backed by International Container Terminal Services, Inc.

Villaroman is gunning for a second major championship a month after handily beating Ardina in the RP Amateur final.

The 12-year-old Ardina, meanwhile, will try to become the youngest winner of the annual tournament after an outstanding campaign last year. She is actually going for a third national title after winning the Indonesia and Hong Kong Opens last year.

Players from Thailand, Malaysia, United States, Hong Kong and Indonesia are also taking part in the Open.

Invited to the opening rites on Tuesday are Ricky Razon of ICSTI, Bomboy Araneta and Earl McCarthy of TCC, Transportation Secretary and NGAP president Leandro Mendoza, PSC chair Butch Ramirez and LPGA campaigner Jennifer Rosales.

Tuñacao set for OPBF title defense

REIGNING ORIENTAL AND PACIFic Boxing Federation (OPBF) bantamweight champion Malcolm Tuñacao leaves today for Japan where he will defend his title against Filipino Rolly Matsushita on Saturday at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo. Leaving with Tuñacao is Philippine bantamweight champion Michael Domingo, who will see action in the undercard against Japanese Kazuyuki Ichikawa. This will be Tuñacao's third defense of the title he won in late 2005. Matsushita, formerly known as Rolly Lunas, is a former Pan-Asia Boxing Association champion. Since moving out of the country, he has won two fights, although he remains a heavy underdog against Tuñacao, who once reigned as the WBC flyweight world champion.

Salven Lagumbay, Contributor

KONICA GOLF

Toyota cars staked for aces in Pro-Am

TRADITION HAS BEEN UPheld as Toyota Motors Philippines agreed to stake two new car models as hole-in-one prizes in the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am golf championship set Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at The Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

An Avanza will be up for grabs in the Celebrity Tournament on Jan. 30, with no less than former President Fidel V. Ramos leading the presidential flight in the company of DHL-WWW Express head Rod Feliciano, Transportation Secretary Larry Mendoza, the NGAP president; and U-Bix chair Edilberto B. Bravo.

"Toyota has been a partner of the Pro-Am," said Bravo, who fathered the revival of the fabled tournament in 2001.

An Altis car will go to the first player who scores a hole-in-one in the tournament that requires a two-man team, consisting of a pro and an amateur, to hit one ball alternately from tee to green.

"It brings us joy to continue to align with a prestigious tournament like the Konica Minolta Pro-Am," said Daniel M. Isla, TMP's first vice president for marketing.

Gerard Cantada and JR Tanpinco won the last three editions of the event, which now offers a total pot of P1.7 million.

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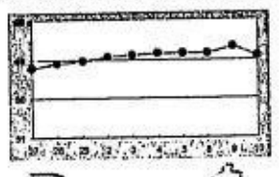
Exports jumped 10.8% in November to $4.02B

11-month total rose by 15.8% to $43.35B

INDICATORS



₱48.91 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 10, 2006

By Michelle V. Remo

PHILIPPINE EXPORTS jumped 10.8 percent in November last year to $4.02 billion, the 10th straight month of double-digit growth, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

However, the growth figure pales compared to the 15.5-percent rise posted in October. Electronics, which accounted for 63 percent of total export earnings in November, grew only 2.6 percent year-on-year to $2.53 billion, also a disappointment compared to the 9.9-percent rise in October, the NSO said.

Total exports in the 11 months to November totalled $43.35 billion, up 15.8 percent.

Apparel and clothing accessories were the second-biggest exports in November, rising 20.5 percent to $200 million.

Exports to the United States, the Philippines' main market, rose 17.4 percent from a year earlier to $725 million while Japan, the second largest market, slipped one percent to $627.68 million.

Song Seng Wun, an economist at Singapore-based CIMB-GK Research, said the November growth in Philippine exports came in lower than his projected 13 percent rise for the month. "But this

EXPORTS/ B3

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12 firms keen on 10-yr contract to operate Subic-Clark tollway

MetroPac unit, Ayala Property lead the list

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TWELVE COMPANIES HAVE EXPRESSED interest in a 10-year contract to operate and maintain the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway, according to the Bases Conversion and Development Authority.

BCDA president and chief executive Narciso Abaya said these companies had submitted to the agency letters of intent to participate in a bidding for the contract.

The interested parties were First Philippine Holdings Corp., Mideast Alliance Resources Corp., SNC Lavalin International, Ausphil Tollways Corp., Pacific Concrete Products, UEM-Mara Philippines Corp., R.D. Policarpio Co., Metro Pacific Investments Corp., Ayala Property Management Corp., STAR Infrastructure Development Corp., J.V. Angeles Construction Corp., and Pietras Builders Inc.

The BCDA said bids had to be submitted on Feb. 12. It added that the contract would be awarded on March 21.

Expected to be completed by the end of 2007, the 93.77-kilometer tollway is a flagship project of the Arroyo administration. It is intended to transform Central and Northern Luzon into a "super region" and is expected to create "a backbone of a new economic growth corridor, which in time would be more significant than Metro Manila."

The tollway, which will start operations next year, would cut travel time between the Subic Bay and Clark special economic zones to 30 minutes and between Clark and the Hacienda Luisita area in Tarlac to 20 minutes. Travel time between these points currently takes as long as two hours

Abaya said the O&M contract would cover toll collection and traffic management; roadway maintenance; general administration, and greening and landscaping.

Barbara Andal, BCDA business development manager, said the agency had set a ceiling for the bidders' proposed share in the toll fees at 12.2 percent.

"If the winning bidder offered 5 percent, it will receive 5 percent of the toll fees collected yearly for the entire 10-year contract period," Andal said.

She said the rest of the toll fees collected would be earmarked for servicing the loan used to finance the construction of the toll road.

Game's bond

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

OUR FAVORITE NAPOCOR, WHICH PASSED on some P200 billion of its monstrous debts to the national government meaning, actually, to all taxpayers like you and me— seems to be addicted to this game of borrowing.

While everybody was not looking during last month's holidays, Napocor gamely dumped some P10 billion worth of bonds on the domestic market.

And the sad part was, well, Napocor officials tried to make us believe, through their press statements, that the bond float was somehow part of the redemption of mankind.

Okay—Napocor indeed got interest rates that were lower than it expected, because bidders swamped the flotation.

That was so, according to Napocor officials, because the state-owned monopoly was enjoying the confidence of the financial markets. Yipii—we are saved? Really now!

Again, that is the bankrupt Napocor, the same company that, as I said, merely got rid of P200 billion of its debts by dumping it on the taxpayers. I just cannot bet my overused athletic supporter on that claim about market "confidence" in the company.

And so Napocor, with "guidance" from the Bureau of the National Treasury, plus apparent inspiration from above (i.e. its private financial advisers and underwriters), decided to accept a bigger amount of bids.

The plan was to float only P6 billion worth of bonds. But seemingly touched by the outpouring of support from the financial community, Napocor and its advisers decided that they had better accepted P10 billion of the bids instead.

We all know what a higher amount of float would add up to—things like higher underwriting fees, higher commissions and all the hidden costs of any financial package.

In the past, the national government was one of the biggest buyers of Napocor bonds. So much so that the Commission on Audit questioned the legality of such a practice.

Forget the legality. It is the cost to the taxpayers that can make you seething mad.

You see, the national government must also borrow the money to be able to buy the Napocor bonds, but the government had to pay higher interest than what it could earn from the bonds.

Just how much the national government bought of that P10-billion Napocor float last month is still anybody's guess.

* * *

STILL, the good news in the power sector comes from PSALM—Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., the body tasked by law to privatize the power plants of the ailing Napocor.

PSALM recently awarded the Pantabangan-Masiway hydroelectric complex to First Gen Hydro Power Corp. after an uneventful bidding. Good.

To our contacts in the power sector, it shows that PSALM can do the privatization of the power sector with the least controversy.

The seamless bidding for the Pantabangan-Masiway complex can bring back the investors who already gave up hope on the power sector privatization program.

Everybody backed off, you see, because of the botched privatization of the Masinloc power plant.

Remember that—the one involving a local broker said to be working for influential people, plus a Malaysian buyer that turned out to have no money, who nevertheless gained favor with presidential sidekick Secretary Michael Defensor supposedly for the sake of our relations with Malaysia?

Anyway, First Gen Hydro had announced that it would invest $100 million in the complex to increase its capacity from 112 megawatts to 190 MW, meaning, the fresh investments can stabilize the power supply in Luzon.

What's more, the new owner said it would retain all the employees of the power plant. The usual practice in any corporate takeover is, well, the new owners install their own team.

First Gen Hydro called its decision a "social responsibility." I really want to jump for joy.

* * *

Also up for awarding by the Department of Finance to the winning bidder are of course the P25-billion or so worth of shares in a little known company called PITC.

The DOF held the bidding last month, and only two groups submitted bids.

Immediately, reports came out about some groups that were questioning the lack of bidders. You know, why only two groups came out to play?

Well, for one, I think that P25 billion is not a small amount. Not many groups in this country could come up with that kind of money. And even if they could, not many would want to buy into a business in which they would not have controlling interest, despite such a huge investment.

PITC, you see, is the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. This is the holding company for PLDT common shares that the courts ruled were part of the supposed ill-gotten wealth of former President Ferdinand Marcos. The P25-billion worth of shares in PITC in the bidding, mind you, represented only something like a 7-percent interest in PLDT.

Today, the controlling group in PLDT is the Hong Kong-based First Pacific, represented here by its managing director Manuel Pangilinan.

Pangilinan already announced that First Pacific would reserve the right to match the price offered by the winning bidder to get the P25-billion block.

That means, to discourage First Pacific from grabbing the block, the bidder will have to offer a really stiff price, something that First Pacific will not be willing to match.

And so what is the fuss all about?

Shares down 0.71% on low export report

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.71 percent lower on Wednesday as investors took disappointing export data as an excuse to take profits, dealers said.

November export growth came in at a lower-than-expected 10.8 percent compared to a robust 15.5 percent gain in October.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 21.24 points at 2,951.08 after trading between 2,939.39 and 2,975.01.

The broader all-share index fell 14.13 points to 1,844.

Losers outnumbered gainers 54 to 49, with 55 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 3.8 billion shares worth P2.3 billion. The peso traded at 48.81 to the dollar.

"The lower growth in exports provided the market an excuse to unload and take a breather after its recent rallies," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

"We may see further consolidation as the market awaits fresh leads," he added.

Mall operator SM Prime Holdings Inc. fell 50 centavos to P11.25 while conglomerate Ayala Corp. was down P10 at P545.

Megaworld Corp, the most actively traded stock, bucked the trend with a gain of four centavos to P2.46 following its stock rights offer.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone was unchanged at P2,450. San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares slipped 50 centavos to P63.50 while its B-shares retreated by P1 to P74. *AFP*

Galoc drilling to start in Q3

By Abigail L. Ho

NIDO PETROLEUM PHILIPPINES PTY. Ltd. expects to start producing oil from the Galoc oil field by late this year or early next year, as drilling on the area is scheduled to begin in the third quarter.

In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, Joanne Williams, deputy managing director of Nido Philippines parent Nido Petroleum Ltd., said the company had already secured all the formal approvals and equipment contracts for the project.

Having achieved several other significant milestones last year, she said Nido was confident that drilling on the Galoc oil field could start in the third quarter, with first oil to be drawn around four months after that.

"In addition, we have engaged an independent oil marketing consultant to assist in the development of Nido's oil marketing and hedging policy," she said.

In an earlier interview, she said Nido would be investing $20 million this year for the development of the Galoc oil field.

To fund the Galoc development, Nido chief financial officer Gillian Evans said the company was working on a $20-million financing facility that should be completed within this month or next.

According to Nido, the first development phase for the Galoc oil field requires an investment of $86 million, including a 12.5-percent contingency, on behalf of the Service Contract 14 joint venture.

Nido holds a 22.279-percent working interest in the field, which is operated by the Galoc Production Co. This means that its share in the development cost should amount to around $19.2 million.

International energy consulting firm Gaffney, Cline and Associates (GCA), through a reserves certification program, confirmed that the Galoc oil field had 9.7 million barrels of proved oil reserves.

ICTSI buying into Chinese port operator

By Riza T. Olchondra

INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER TERMINAL Services Inc. (ICTSI) has signed an agreement to buy a 60-percent stake in Chinese port operator Yantai Gangtong Container Terminal Co. Ltd. (Gangtong Container Co.).

In a statement, ICTSI said it bought the shares through holding company ICTSI (Hong Kong) Ltd., which signed the joint venture agreement with Yantai Port Group Co. Ltd. and SDIC Communication Yantai Gangtong Container Terminal Co.

The purchase price was not revealed but company spokesperson Jupiter Kalambakal said it would be disclosed soon to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The state-owned Yantai Port Group and the SDIC will each retain 20 percent interest in Gangtong Container Co., which manages the Yantai Gangtong Terminal in the Shandong Province.

ICTSI said the deal, including the conversion of Gangtong Container into a Sino-foreign joint venture, was still subject to regulatory approvals in the People's Republic of China.

The Yantai Gangtong Terminal project will be the latest addition to the company's growing portfolio of local and international operations. The Philippine-based global port operator has container terminal operations in six continents.

Located within the Port of Yantai, Gangtong Container Co. operates container berths 38/39 of the Yantai Gangtong Terminal, including a 280,000-square-meter container yard and back-up area.

Yantai Port is one of China's 10 biggest ports. In 2006, it handled 1.169 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), representing a 68.4 percent growth over the 2005 volume.

Yantai is at the eastern tip of the Shandong Peninsula, bordering the Yellow Sea and Bohai Bay. With a population of 6.5 million, Yantai registered a 2006 GDP of about RMB 240 billion, a 19.2-percent increase over 2005.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 10, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Aslatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	21,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	45.5	45.5	44.5	44.5	915,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65.5	66.5	65	66	1,664,900
China Banking Corp.	685	685	680	680	6,310
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	2,080,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	80.5	80.5	79.5	79.5	9,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	53	53	52	52	1,043,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	900
Philippine National Bank	45	46	45	46	58,200
Phil. Savings Bank	48	48	48	48	500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	27.5	27.5	26.5	27	174,800
Security Bank Corp.	65.5	66.5	65.5	66	194,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	48.5	49	48.5	49	2,100
NANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5	5.1	4.95	5.1	147,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	2,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1615	1615	1610	1610	280
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	488,000
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	2,623,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.5	4.5	52,800,000
First Gen Corp.	54	54	53.5	53.5	230,400
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	68	68	67.5	67.5	945,700
Manila Electric Co. A	57	57	55.5	55.5	145,700
Manila Electric Co. B	57.5	57.5	55.5	56	796,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9	9	8.9	9	928,000
Petron Corp.	4.05	4.15	4.05	4.1	2,179,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	15,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	15,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42.5	43	42	42	559,300
RFM Corp.	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.18	2,088,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	5,000
Swift Food, Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	260,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63.5	63.5	49,800
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74	74	719,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.18	2.18	2.1	2.1	1,069,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	19	18.5	19	1,900,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.14	1.14	1.1	1.12	13,843,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.65	3.9	3.55	3.9	5,283,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	20,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	3,232,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.15	4.25	233,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.5	1,652,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.7	0.75	0.69	0.74	72,240,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.215	8,540,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.011	0.0085	0.011	1,647,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.011	0.009	0.011	162,000,000
Ayala Corp.	555	555	540	545	109,920
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.62	0.65	0.62	0.63	780,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	7.7	7.7	7.4	7.6	1,847,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.0625	0.0575	0.0625	4,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.85	2.9	2.85	2.9	486,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	10,110,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	37,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	351,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	187,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	131,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	16,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	8,667,000
DMCI Holdings Inc	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.6	888,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	50,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.75	2,733,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.85	0.99	0.85	0.99	50,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	710,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.04	2.06	1,110,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	578,000
Keppel Holdings	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	50,000
Medco Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	500,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	10,000
Magnum Holdings, Inc.	4.15	5	4.1	5	4,245,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.64	1.9	1.62	1.88	13,143,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	10,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,170,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	220,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	4,430,000
SM Investments Corp.	317.5	320	312.5	315	103,430
South China Resources Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	230,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.6	1.68	1.6	1.68	95,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	2,770,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.25	15.75	2,916,500
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	100,000
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.18	1.2	10,888,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.64	1.7	659,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.54	1.6	1.54	1.6	23,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	11,460,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.15	421,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.42	203,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	2,190,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.62	0.62	54,780,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	469,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	2,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.76	1.78	31,951,000
Interport Res.	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	71,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	53,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.3	110,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.5	0.46	0.48	2,570,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.74	0.79	0.74	0.78	18,880,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.46	174,345,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	126,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	300,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	50,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.25	15.25	15	15	717,300
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.69	0.7	0.68	0.7	18,910,000
SM Development Corp.	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	1,125,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11	11.25	6,675,400
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	110,000
Unwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	1,300,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.25	10,500
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.98	2.02	1.96	1.98	10,914,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1240	1245	1225	1230	17,640
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.5	6.6	4,242,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2430	2450	2415	2450	116,520
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	15,250,000
Ionics Inc.	2.5	2.55	2.44	2.5	2,516,000
IPVG Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	161,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	2,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.32	320,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.7	2.85	2.55	2.75	3,509,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.033	14,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.05	267,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	697,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	22	22	21.75	21.75	6,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	5,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.06	2.06	1,545,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	58,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.61	470,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	2,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	12,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	152,000
Paxys Inc.	19	19	19	19	2,200
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.36	1.4	30,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.5	301,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.5	5.8	5.5	5.6	238,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	328,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.8	1,391,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.3	31,000
Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	1,500
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,350,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	3,160,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.024	92,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	78,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	458,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	4,035,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17	17	16.25	16.75	255,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.72	0.72	0.7	0.71	1,950,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.42	1,674,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	90,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	125,800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	78,300,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.08	284,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	174,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.8	9.9	9.8	9.9	62,000

CURRENCIES

January 10, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.769408	1.000000	48.7060
Japan	Yen	0.006447	0.008379	0.4081
United Kingdom	Pound	1.492652	1.940000	94.4896
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098675	0.128248	6.2464
Switzerland	Franc	0.619941	0.805737	39.2442
Canada	Dollar	0.653981	0.849979	41.3991
Singapore	Dollar	0.501015	0.651169	31.7158
Australia	Dollar	0.600350	0.780275	38.0041
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.040871	2.652520	129.1936
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205148	0.266631	12.9865
Brunei	Dollar	0.499389	0.649056	31.6129
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000111	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021432	0.027855	1.3567
UAE	Dirham	0.209494	0.272279	13.2616
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.299700	63.3032
Korea	Won	0.000820	0.001066	0.0519
China	Yuan**	0.098579	0.128123	6.2404
Argentina	Peso	0.249605	0.324412	15.8008
Brazil	REAL	0.357532	0.464684	22.6329
Denmark	Kroner	0.134198	0.174417	8.4952
India	Rupee	0.017380	0.022589	1.1002
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219392	0.285144	13.8882
Mexico	New Peso	0.069978	0.090950	4.4298
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531580	0.690894	33.6507
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012618	0.016399	0.7987
South Africa	Rand	0.105688	0.137363	6.6904
Sweden	Kroner	0.109641	0.142501	6.9407
Syria	Pound	0.014822	0.019264	0.9383
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023565	0.030628	1.4918

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Jan. 9, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time closing rate as of Jan. 9, 2007

Investors snap up $1B in RP bonds with bids totalling $9.6B

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTORS YESTERDAY SNAPPED UP $1 billion worth of bonds offered by the government, with the float highly oversubscribed as tenders reached $9.6 billion.

"The (government) is once again pleased with the local and foreign investor reception and looks forward to continuing this partnership over the long term," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a press statement.

The 25-year bonds, which carry a coupon rate of 6.375 percent, were priced at 97.862 percent to yield 6.55 percent.

Of the $1 billion sold, 57 percent were sold to investors from Asia, 23 percent from Europe and 20 percent from the United States.

Fiscal authorities said the government chose not to borrow more than $1 billion despite the huge volume of bids, saying it did not want to over-borrow given the declining budget deficit.

Proceeds of the bond sale will be used to plug the P63-billion budget deficit targeted for this year and to pay off maturing obligations. The deficit ceiling for 2007 is lower than the P80 billion to P90 billion in deficit projected for 2006.

Credit rating firm Fitch Ratings has assigned a currency rating of "BB" to the Philippine bonds. Fitch said in a statement that the rating was anchored on the steady decline in the national government's deficit and in its debts.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said that with the latest bond sale, the government completed early in the year its foreign, commercial borrowing program for 2007. The government is also programmed to borrow $1.47 billion worth of official development assistance (ODA) this year, he added.

"The timing was right. The government was able to take advantage of the good fundamentals before the environment becomes uncertain," said a market analyst. The analyst said that with the coming elections in May, the economic climate might not be as good as it currently is.

He said the improving fiscal condition of the Philippine government and its earlier moves to prepay some of its foreign debts made the country's debt securities highly attractive to foreign investors.

Citigroup, Credit Suisse First Boston and Deutsche Bank served as joint lead managers and book-runners for the bond sale.

The turnout of the bond sale was consistent with the positive investor sentiment seen in the stock and foreign exchange markets, Cruz said.

The peso hit a new six-year high of 48.66 to a dollar on Tuesday. The strengthening of the local currency was attributed to the huge dollar inflows in the form of remittances and foreign investments.

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BSP to spend $700M to settle debts this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS WILL shell out about $700 million for foreign debt servicing this new year but does not see the need to tap any new external loans to refinance them, top officials said.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters that the central money institution, which has shunned offshore bond floats in favor of syndicated foreign currency loans in recent years, was not even planning to tap any foreign loan this year.

Instead, the BSP is keen on further taking advantage of the strong peso and the robust influx of dollars to trim its foreign obligations.

In 2006, the BSP retired $1.4 billion worth of foreign debts ahead of maturity, including the $220 million in remaining debt to the International Monetary Fund, the prepayment of which paved the way for the country's early exit from a post-program monitoring arrangement with the fund.

Asked about the possibility of more foreign debt prepayments this year, Tetangco said: "We're looking at that, if it makes financial sense."

In a separate interview, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the foreign debt requirements this year could easily be sourced out of the BSP's foreign reserves.

Estimating the BSP's foreign debt servicing requirements this year at about $600-$700 million, Guinigundo echoed Tetangco's view that there would thus be no need to tap fresh syndicated loans this year.

Guinigundo said there was ample dollar supply in the system and that maturities were not too big.

"The biggest maturities are not coming until 2009 or 2008," he said.

The last time the BSP tapped a syndicated loan was in November 2005 when five foreign banks arranged a $500-million club loan. Standard Chartered Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp., Calyon, HSH Nordbank AG Singapore branch and ING Bank NV syndicated the term loan facility, proceeds of which were used for the refinancing and general funding requirements of the BSP.

The country's gross international reserves soared to an all-time high of $23 billion in end-2006 even as the public sector took advantage of robust dollar inflows from overseas Filipino workers and offshore investors to retire foreign debts ahead of maturity during the year.

Exports . . . From page B1

is not surprising since the bulk of the shipments had already been done during the peak periods of September and October."

He said there could be a slight moderation of export growth in 2007 to 8-10 percent given the anticipated slowdown in the US economy.

The Philippine government had forecast 10 percent growth in exports in 2006.

The National Economic and Development Authority said average exports growth for the entire 2006 was expected to be significantly more than 10 percent. The Neda attributed the robust export sales to the higher demand especially for electronics products.

The double-digit growth in exports has been cited as one of the growth drivers of the Philippine economy in 2006. The economy grew 5.4 percent in January to September from a year ago and the government expects the full-year growth to reach the low-end of the target of between 5.5 and 6.3 percent.

But Peter Lee, economist from the University of Asia & the Pacific, said that while exports might still grow this year, a slowdown was likely given the expected deceleration of the US and the entire global economy.

UA&P projects exports to have grown by at about 13 percent in 2006, but only expects a 10-percent expansion in 2007.

Lee supported calls for a diversification of the country's exports product. He said the Philippines would benefit from reducing its dependence on electronics and developing other key products for exports to be protected from uncertainties in the way global demand for electronics behave.

But he said developing other products for exports required attracting more foreign investments in other sectors besides electronics. He said that to attract more investments, the country should address long-standing problems of poor infrastructure, high power cost and expensive labor. *With a report from AFP*

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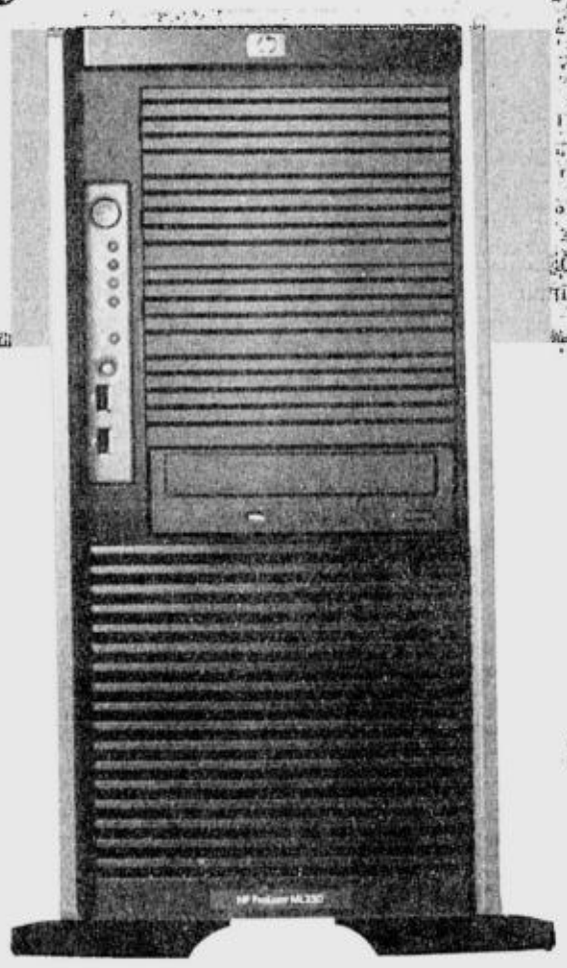

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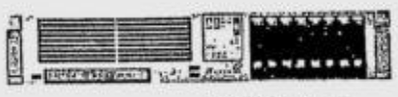

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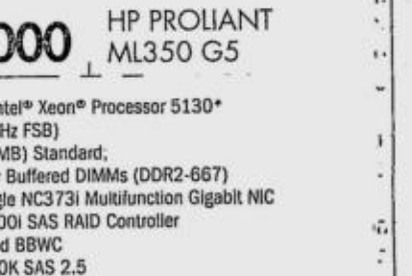

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National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
MY PUMPKIN LTD. CO. 631 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Chunchun Wang	Creative Manager
IBM SOLUTIONS DELIVERY, INC. 5/F, IBM Plaza, E. Rodriguez Ave. Libis, Quezon City	Sandy Vann	Project Director
STEVEN J. LEACH JR. & ASSOCIATES (CONSULTANTS), INC. 9F DPC Place Bldg., 2322 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Benjamin Edward Hughes II	President
WITCO INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORPORATION Unit A-B, Paz Guazon St., Paco, Manila	William Moon Ho Ko	Director
DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY 2401 Taft Ave., Manila	Sang Seok Lee	Assistant Lecturer
SEOJUNEKOREA, INC. UG9 Megaplaza ADB Ave. cor. Garnet Rd., Ortigas Ctr. Pasig City	Young Sil Kim	Consultant
GLOBE TELECOM, INC. 3/F, Globe Telecom Plaza 2 Pioneer St. cor. Madison St. Mandaluyong City	Henry Tiu Yeh	Consultant
JAPAN AIRLINES INTERNATIONAL CO. LTD. 2/F, 6788 Ayala Ave., Oledan Sq. Makati City	Masatoshi Nakamura	Assistant Maintenance Manager
JUNGCHUL ACADEMY PHILIPPINES INC. 3/F Goodwill Bldg., 393 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Hye Kyung Kim	Operations Manager
OXFAM GB, PHILIPPINES 95-A Malumanay St., Teachers' Village, Diliman, Quezon City	Amir Zahir	Regional Human Resources Advisor
HSBC ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILS.), INC. 5150 North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	David Allen Grimme	Chief Operating Officer, Global Resourcing, East Asia
L & S LANGUAGE TRAINING CENTER INC. 16 Cabarrus St., Fruition Bldg., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Jeonghyun Jung	Senior Account Executive
PRU LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF U.K. 25/F, The Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kean Leong Hah	Chief Financial Officer
GE MONEY BANK, INC. (A SAVINGS BANK) E. Rodriguez cor. Monte de Piedad St., Cubao, Quezon City	Meeta Mukherjee	Portfolio Analytics Officer
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3/4/5, Basement Export Bank Plaza, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Wee Shien John Ang	Over-All Managing Director
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Helianto	IT Support Staff
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Lian Hu Eng	IT Support Staff
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Yeh Chau Lim	IT Support Staff
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Suanlo	IT Support Staff
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Kim Hong Tan	IT Support Staff
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Kian Seng Law	IT Support Staff
CASPO INCORPORATED 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Cheng Wah Tiew	IT Support Staff

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Jan. 11, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila

SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATE

I, **LEONIDES F. CRUZ**, Corporate Secretary of the Manila International Airport Authority, do hereby certify that, at its 265th Regular Board Meeting held on 29 May 2006, the MIAA Board passed the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-032

"**WHEREAS**, the MIAA Board of Directors, in its Resolution No. 2005-058, has authorized the conduct by MIAA Management of public hearings on the planned imposition of Security and Development Charge on departing international passengers;

"**WHEREAS**, in the public hearings attended by airline representatives and other stakeholders, including the media, the need to enhance the security systems and programs at the NAIA to address the over-growing security threat to civil aviation was recognized;

"**WHEREAS**, consistent with internationally-accepted practice, the Security and Development Charge is sought to the imposed to augment the funding requirements to help finance the high costs of such security enhancements;

"**WHEREAS**, after considering the issues, concerns and the inputs from the public hearings, particularly on the spread of such financial burden not only to affect departing international passengers but other airport users as well, including the Authority itself, the amount of US DOLLAR 3.50 as Security and Development Charge was determined as the appropriate amount;

"**BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of Management, that the request of MIAA for authority to impose Security and Development Charge of US DOLLAR 3.50 on all international departing passengers not exempted by law or any government rules and regulations, and to denominate the same in Philippine Peso at the rate of PESOS: TWO HUNDRED (Php200.00) be, as it is hereby **approved**, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations;

"**RESOLVED, FURTHER**, that the imposition of the Security and Development Charge be effective fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or whenever the MIAA General Manager deems appropriate under the circumstances, whichever is later;

"**RESOLVED, FINALLY**, that as regards departing domestic passengers, the authority of Management to conduct public hearings on the imposition of a Security and Development Charge in the amount of PESOS: SEVENTY FIVE (Php75.00) per passenger, be, as it is hereby, **approved**."

That, the foregoing Resolution is still in full force and effect, and has not been repealed, amended, or modified as of this date.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed and affixed the seal of the MIAA to this Secretary's Certificate this 6th day of July 2006 in Pasay, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) **LEONIDES F. CRUZ**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI - Jan. 4 & 11, 2007)

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL Interesid Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

No.	Quantity	Unit	Item Decription
1	84	UNITS	CURRENT TRANSFORMER 15 KV, MULTI RATIO CTR 10-15-20/5 BRAND: W.T.W, STROM WANDLER, MADE IN GERMANY OUTDOOR TYPE WITH SEALING PROVISION
2	84	UNITS	POTENTIAL TRANSFORMER 15 KV, PTR 8, 400/120 BRAND: W.T.W, STROM WANDLER, MADE IN GERMANY OUTDOOR TYPE WITH SEALING PROVISION FINANCING SCHEME OF NOT LESS THAN SIX (6) MONTHS

You may secure the Pre-Qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of January 18, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Bidding will be conducted on January 25, 2007.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of January 25, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI–Jan. 11, 2007)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Rodita S. Bombita Josephine L. Nunes
Ludy B. Bolague John Raymond Grundy

We, the American Longevity Philippines with an address at Unit C, 8th Floor PDCP Bank Center, P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City has shorten its term of corporate existence effective December 5, 2006.

(PDI–Jan. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

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Alumni Homecoming
The UST College of Nursing Class '57 will hold its Golden Jubilee Alumni Homecoming from Jan. 26 to 28, 2007.
You are cordially invited!
For more details, you may call Donna at 634-7570 or 634-7571

Roadshows launch RP-AUS Aid anniversary

ROADSHOWS OF DANCES, SONG WRITing competitions, skits, games, exhibits and trade fairs launched the 20th year anniversary of the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) this year.

Unlike in other celebrations, the main feature in the roadshows are the talents of farmers and community members who did skits and composed songs based on their particular Pacap experience in building and sustaining community development projects.

Trade fairs featured the main fruits of the Pacap livelihood programs such as cloth, table mats, table runners & other accessories made from raffia and brooms made from buri of Bohol; organic rice, fruits & vegetables and accessories made from abaca of Iloilo; dried goods such as daing & pusit of Capiz; piña and raffia cloth, souvenir items made from buri of Aklan; mud crab, coconut products, tuba, bags and accessories made from waste materials of Northern Samar.

The rest of the celebration will take place in Surigao del Norte (Surigao del Norte City December 5, Siargao Island December 8, Dinagat Island December 10, Lake Mainit December 12), Cagayan de Oro (December 16), Misamis Occidental (January 8, 10, 12, 14, 2007), Cotabato City (January 24, 2007), South Cotabato (January 27, 29, 31, 2007), Ateneo de Naga, Bicol (February 5, 2007) , UP Diliman (February 11, 2007), Davao City (a National Forum from February 21-23, 2007).

PACAP is a program of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). For inquiries, please call up 6317549, 6317943 local 105.

SOUTH COTABATO FARMER TENDS TO his durian plant.

Reviving the art of handloom weaving

THE PHILIPPINES-Australia Community Assistance Program (Pacap), in partnership with the Philippines Foundation for Resource Management (PFRM) have organized the handloom weavers of Marawi City to look into the functionality of handloom weaving, its market prospects in an environment dominated by ready to wear clothing and the skill training needed to pass on the craft to the succeeding generations.

Maranao women had long been noted for the sophistication of their handloom weaving which display ornate designs and vibrant colors that depicted the culture of Mindanao. However, according to Pacap Area Manager for Responsive Activity Schemes, Maria Paz Limpo, modernization and change in lifestyles, has caused the younger Maranao generation to slowly lose interest in the craft.

Because of this, serious efforts had been given to revive the art form and to create a new generation of weavers, particularly in Marawi City. Through Pacap and PFRM, a Handloom Weaving Enhancement Program was implemented to realize the goals of reviving and sustaining the Handloom craft in Marawi City.

In a year's time, the program provided high speed equipment needed to fashion the handloom materials into envelopes, wallets, various home decors and other items which the market required. The program also provided a showroom where buyers may place orders for specific needs as conferences and corporate giveaways.

To this date, Limpo says that about 50 women weavers enjoy working in the comfort of their homes while they earned additional income for their families. Also, a new generation of young women is now training under them to be the future mentors of handloom weaving.

AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TONY HELY and Pacap Program Coordinator, Lourdes Padilla visit the Polomolok Bagsakan center in South Cotabato.

HANDLOOM PRODUCTS MADE BY MARANAO WOMEN.
Handloom products are displayed at the Philippine Foundation for Resource Management (PFRM) showroom in Marawi City. Pacap's handloom enhancement program enables Maranaw women to earn income while working in their homes.

Calling all Alumnae of
Our Lady of Loreto College!!!
Our reunion / homecoming will be on Sunday, Jan. 14, 2007at Stella Maris College.
Lots of fun, surprises, and prizes are stored for you.
Please join us and reminisce the good old days with our former classmates, advisers, sisters and teachers. Registration is at 8 a.m., followed with a mass.
For information please call the following:
Ann Foz - 7423201;
Josie Balbido-8090724;
Virgie Mendoza - 7160926;
Violy Moneda-7346269.

I existed from all eternity and,
behold, I am here;
and I shall exist till the end of time,
for my being has no end.

Kahlil Gibran

With deepest sorrow and heartfelt grief,
we announce the untimely passing of

Jose Luis "Joel" Vargas Tantoco

August 29, 1968 – January 8, 2007

He is survived by his bereaved parents,
Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Jr. (Rico) & Marina Vargas (Nena),
caring siblings
Bienvenido III (Donnie) & wife **Catherine Yu (Crickette),**
Guillermo Manuel (Gippy) & wife **Hindrika Webber, Roberto Miguel (Robbie),**
Katrina Isabel & husband **Pablo Celso (Paolo) Lobregat,**
Juan Paolo & wife **Bernardina Arroyo**, and **Cristina Beatrice (Bea).**
His doting grandparents are
Ambassador Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Sr. & **Gliceria Rustia Tantoco** (†)
and **Angel Yulo Vargas** (†) & **Carmen Soriano Vargas.**
His loving aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, and so many friends
are one with his family in their hour of grief.

He lived a life well-lived.
He went to his Creator well prepared.
He is sorely missed.

Funeral Mass will be on Friday, 12 January 2007 at 9 o'clock in the morning
at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
Dao St., San Antonio Village, Makati City.
Cremation will follow immediately after the Mass.

BUSINESS

BOI approves Medical City expansion

Hospital eyes slice of medical tourism market

By Abigail L. Ho

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS has approved the expansion of The Medical City Hospital, which will entail an investment of P446.175 million in healthcare and wellness services.

The approval of the hospital's expansion registration, the first such project to be approved by the BOI, will enable it to become more competitive in the field of medical tourism.

"With the purpose of enhancing the hospital's competitiveness, the firm is planning to increase the capacity and range of healthcare and wellness services it can offer to its clients by acquiring additional modern medical equipment," Medical City said.

"The expansion of Medical City Hospital is expected to address the shortage of hospitals to serve the population of Pasig and the metropolis in general, especially for those that require specialized forms of treatment, surgical procedure and intensive care," it added.

Medical City also said that, being a Department of Tourism-accredited tertiary hospital for medical tourism, it would also serve foreign clients.

The required investment in the project would be raised entirely through equity contributions, Medical City said.

Upon start of commercial operation in July, the project is expected to generate 55 new jobs.

"The modernization of the hospital is in line with the country's goal of becoming a health and wellness tourism destination in the region. To market the Philippines as an alternative health tourism destination, it is important that hospitals must improve the quality of their health services, which means investing in modern medical equipment and facilities," Medical City said.

The Philippines is currently competing with Thailand to be Asia's medical tourism hub.

Apart from being a DOT-accredited medical tourism hospital, Medical City also serves as a training hospital for various medical schools.

Just recently, Medical City signed an agreement to be the teaching and training hospital for the Ateneo Medical School, which is putting up a building beside the hospital.

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PSALM optimistic about sale of power assets

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE POWER SECTOR ASSETS and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) expects to raise $1.6 billion this year from the sale of assets of National Power Corp.

PSALM president Nieves Osorio said the combined assets to be sold this year represent 1,600 megawatts or around 40 percent of Napocor's operating assets for sale.

The announcement was made late Tuesday after PSALM issued the notice of award to the consortium of Norway's SN Power and Aboitiz Power Corporation (SNAP), declaring the group as the winning bidder for the 360 megawatt Magat hydroelectric power plant in Ramon, Isabela.

The Magat power plant was the second facility successfully sold by PSALM last year, after the 112 MW Pantabangan-Masiway power complex in Nueva Ecija, which was sold in September to First Generation Hydro Power Corp.

An asset purchase agreement for the Magat facility requires SNAP to deliver at least 40 percent of the purchase price of $530 million as upfront payment on or before the closing date, or within 270 days.

The remaining 60 percent may be paid in 14 equal semi-annual payments.

Aboitiz Equity Ventures (AEV) executive vice president Erramon Aboitiz said the Aboitiz group's equity investment in the Magat plant is roughly $100 million.

To partly fund the acquisition of the Magat plant, AEV , the flagship company of the Aboitiz group of companies, will sell 750 million treasury shares this year to raise over P5 billion.

PSALM president Nieves Osorio (left) shakes hands with AEV chief operating officer Erramon Aboitiz after the signing of the memorandum of agreement between the two companies at PSALM office in Makati City. RUDY ESPERAS

The proceeds from the sale will also be used for other power projects that AEV will pursue.

"In today's environment, today is the right time and the right reason to sell for our projects and Magat. We have cash of about $120 million so we can fund Magat without selling the shares, but our plan is to sell that for our other projects," Aboitiz said.

I wish business registration payments don't take too much time!

ATTENTION
ACCOUNTANTS & BUSINESS OWNERS
Meet the January 31 deadline!
You can now pay your Business Registration Fees thru text by using your Globe or TM cellphone.
No more waiting in line at BIR! Just follow the instructions below:

STEP 1
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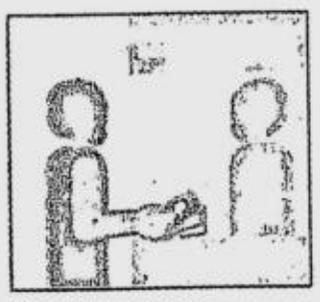
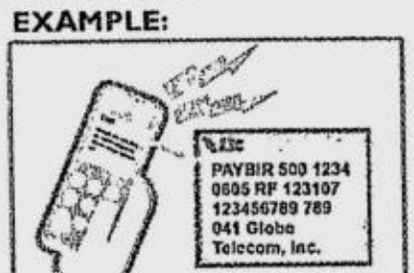
STEP 2
Go to any accredited GCASH Palitan Center to exchange your cash into GCash which you will use to pay BIR.
Ex. Globe Telecom Business Centers, Globelines Payments and Service Centers, SM Department Stores, selected Rural Banks, selected Tambunting and other GCash Partner Pawnshops, Bancnet ATMs and many more.
Call 2882 to find the GCASH Palitan Center nearest you.



STEP 3
Just type:
PAYBIR<space>AMOUNT<space>4-digit GCash PIN<space>Form Type<space>
Tax Type Code<space>Return Period<space>TIN<space>Tax Payer Branch Code<space>
Revenue District Office Code<space>Registered Business Name
and send to 2882*.

EXAMPLE:



LEGEND:

AMOUNT	Standard BIR fee for business permit registration is 500 pesos
Form Type	For Business Registration: 0605
Tax Type Code	For Business Registration: RF
Return Period	Date Format should be MMDDYY: 123107
Tax I.D. No. (TIN)	As reflected on BIR certificate of registration form 2303
Tax Payer Branch Code	
Revenue District Office Code	
Registered Business Name	

Other tax types are also payable!
Call the BIR Hotline at (02)981-8888 and choose E-Services (option 3) for more information.
You can also call 2882 for FREE using your Globe or TM cellphone to get more information about GCash and this service.
*After 1 business day, visit http:\\www1.globe.com.ph/bir/search.aspx to print-out the daily validated payment Form 0605 for posting at the place of business.

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DMCI-Metro Pacific takes over Maynilad

By Christine A. Gaylican

STATE-OWNED METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System has formally turned over its 84-percent share in west concessionaire Maynilad Water Services. Inc. to DMCI-Metro Pacific Water Co.

MWSS officials said the government's equity was formally transferred to the consortium of DMCI Holdings Inc. and Metro Pacific Investments Corp. yesterday during a formal turnover ceremony at the MWSS headquarters in Quezon City.

Of the $74 million that MWSS stands to initially receive, some $59 million will be used to pay for debts shouldered by the government.

According to Metro Pacific Investment Corp. chair Manuel V. Pangilinan, the group has secured $62 million from Ashmore Funds and Metro Pacific Holdings Inc.

A standby letter of credit for $240 million has also been secured from JP Morgan Chase Bank N.A. and a separate omnibus security and credit agreement was forged with Banco de Oro and Development Bank of the Philippines, Pangilinan said in a press briefing yesterday.

Pangilinan said that "as new owners of Maynilad, the company will be made into a profitable one."

"We in Metro Pacific and our partner DMCI, has been known for our dynamic culture of service and this is also our long term commitment for Maynilad," he said.

RP urges Asean action on trade

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CEBU CITY—THE PHILIPPINES has urged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to tell the major players in the World Trade Organization to be more flexible and put free trade talks back on track.

Jose Antonio S. Buencamino, Philippine special trade representative to the WTO, said senior Asean economic officials completed a draft statement yesterday morning, but this would still have to go through the economic ministers and finally through the Asean leaders during the summit proper.

"What (the senior economic officials) have approved is an aggressive statement in the sense that it calls for all members to be more flexible [and] give more concessions," he said.

"Everybody is hoping that the Doha round should be completed this year because after that, it would be a long shot to have the talks prosper at all, *magkakalamigan na* (everybody will lose interest)."

Buencamino said the move was an initiative of the Arroyo administration, which is presiding over the 12th Summit of the 10-member bloc.

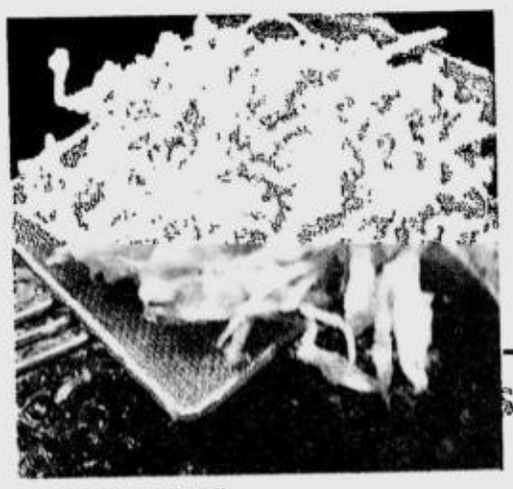
Asean also includes Brunei Darussalam, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The final version that the leaders would approve would make a stand-alone statement—meaning, the Asean speaking as a distinct group within WTO—that may be transmitted to the multilateral body.

A WTO General Council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 7-8.

In July 2006, the WTO decided to suspend the Doha round after members failed to arrive at a consensus on issues like how much more their markets would be open to world trade and how much less governments—particularly those of the developed markets—would subsidize domestic industries, which drive down—some say unfairly—their costs against those of competing foreign industries.

The stalling of the talks was attributed to the failure of the United States and the European Union to agree on the matter of subsidies and tariffs.

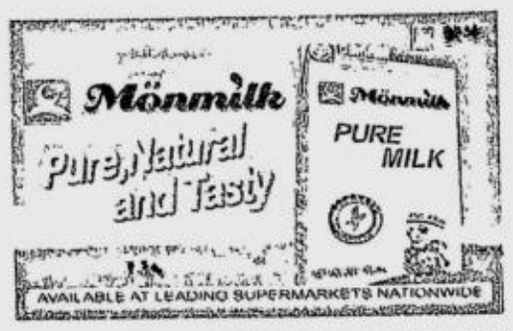


CENDRILLON'S Ukoy

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph



Philippine kitchens from far and near

KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

OVER THE YEARS, PINOY talent has taken center stage in practically every part of the globe.

It is no surprise. We are, after all, Jacks and Jills of many trades. Fortunately, many have opted to be masters in their fields of choice.

Such is the case with Amy Besa and chef Romy Dorotan, owners of the famed Cendrillon Restaurant in Soho, Manhattan. To them we owe the graceful entry of Philippine cuisine to the land of the free.

Together, the duo worked to take Asian cuisine to new heights, particularly ours, by sticking to the age-old fundamentals and principles of Pinoy classic food preparation.

Where many have abandoned ship to westernize Pinoy food, Dorotan and Besa have fought to stay afloat by sticking to tradition. By doing so they have honored our cuisine.

Fortunately for us, in spite of their success, they have remained true to their roots and to their heritage and have authored "Memories of Philippine Kitchens—Stories & Recipes From Far and Near."

I love the feel of a good book, especially when it is penned in a manner that allows me to be a part of it all. Browsing through the pages of this one takes me to places far and near. The title is so apt.

The essays let you take a trip back in time. I could actually imagine myself present in the kitchen. When I close my eyes, I can even envision myself in a *patadyong*. It is nostalgic, it is deja vu, it is beautiful!

While the essays are undoubtedly wonderful, they alone cannot lay claim to the book's genius. The photos are exceptional, too, thanks to yet another master—Neal Oshima! So vibrant are the pictures that they seem to jump out of the pages. Every single ingredient, though raw, seems to scream "eat me," way before it gets added to a dish.

The recipes cannot be overlooked. So meticulously written, each recipe is accompanied by its history and how it came to be.

PATRICK Joson

The book covers subjects and recipes of gustatory significance from Aparri to Jolo; from the Spanish era to the present; from *adobo* to *sinigang*, to Zambales mangoes, to *kakanin*. It features culinary clans and demigods of Pinoy cuisine.

It would be a shame to be Filipino and not own a copy of this. It is, to me, the culinary "Noli Me Tangere."

To Amy and Romy, "Philippine Kitchens—Stories & Recipes from Far and Near" is a legacy in the making. For all that you share, your love of country, your love of food, all that you are to our culture and our heritage, *maraming salamat*! You have done us so, so proud!

Here's a taste of Cendrillon and of "Philippine Kitchens." Ukoy is the most popular item on their menu. Rice flour gives theirs an added crisp. They suggest serving this with *achara*.

Ukoy

• Banana leaf, cleaned, cut to 4x4-in squares. Brush one side lightly with oil.

Ingredients

Batter:

3/4 c rice flour
1/3 c all-purpose flour
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
1 large egg

Filling:

1 c each julienned Napa cabbage, carrots, snow peas, leeks (white parts only)
1 ½ c bean sprouts
1 c chopped, peeled and de-veined shrimp
2 tsp fish sauce
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1-2 tbsp all-purpose flour
Canola oil, for frying
Rice vinegar with sliced garlic and chopped chilis to taste, for serving

Procedure:

Batter:

• Sift flours, baking powder, salt.
• In bowl, beat egg with 3/4 c water.
• Stir in dry ingredients to form a thick but smooth batter. Refrigerate 30 minutes-1 hour.
• Fill wok with Canola oil and heat.

Filling:

• Combine ingredients in a bowl.
• Stir batter and pour just enough into the filling to coat the ingredients.
• Put 1/3 cup of the filling on the oiled side

PHILIPPINE/ C3

AMY Besa and chef Romy Dorotan, owners of the famed Cendrillon Restaurant in Soho, Manhattan

"MEMORIES of Philippine Kitchens—Stories & Recipes from Far and Near"

The Maya Kitchen
CULINARY ARTS CENTER

New Career, New Business and More...

If you want to cook up a new career this new year & wish to get into food business you've always dreamed of you can probably obtain one of the levels of certificate courses from the Maya Kitchen. We're offering all our best-selling courses this month from catering to baking to meal making. Discover the fulfillment of baking & cooking for profit & let 2007 be your most prosperous year ever. Check the schedule below to see how you can get cookin'!

International Classic Menu with Plating Presentation (For career cooks and restaurateurs): Jan. 13 (Sat.) 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Caponata (Roasted mixed vegetables with special sauce), Raviolli in Safron Sauce (Square filled pasta on tomato aujus), Salmon in Sicillian Sauce, Beef Medallion with Grilled Vegetables & Wine Sauce, Angels' Hair with Sundried Tomato, Melon Yoghurt & Apple Ginger Sauce. P900.
Nego Pinoy Ventures: Jan.13 (Sat) 2-6 p.m. Pinoy Waffle, Bibingka, Instant Ginataan "Bilo-bilo" includes lecture on Sales Profit Analysis. Win Kyowa appliances. P750.
Shawarma Style Halal Kababs: Jan. 20 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Chapli (minced meat), Shaamie (Garbanzo) Kababs, Potato, Fish, Chicken Shiesh, Kababs accompaniments & sidings. (Whole wheat chapatti & fresh mint sauce) by Halal expert teacher. Free shawarma business consultation. P900.
Coffee Basic 101 (Barista Course): Jan. 20 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Coverage: Coffee history, Coffee process, Trouble shooting, Coffee blend, Machine know-how-proper grinding. Techniques to perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso doppio, Cappuccino, Latte, Macchiatto; Cold Coffee Concoction: Millennium Kahlua, Milano mocca & Mocca spin. Bonus: Strawberry Spin with coffee tasting & snacks. P1,500.
Samosas, Paratha and Curry: Jan. 27 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Techniques & variations of preparing Samosas: Minced Meat, Vegetables, Potatoes; Paratha: Potato and Mongo; Minced Meat Curry; Padana & Chutney by Pakistani Teacher. P800.
Bartending: Jan. 27 (Sat) 2-6 p.m. Basic Tools, Classifications of Wine & Spirits, Types of Bar Glasses & Usage, Mixing, Serving of Cocktail Drinks including Garnishing with wine tasting & snacks. P1,500.

CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON (Limited enrollment, pre-registration required)

Basic Culinary: Jan. 16-19 / Jan. 30-Feb. 2 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation & safety; nutrition & nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs & spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing & boning poultry, filleting fish & meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry & meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. Free cookbook. P5,000.
Fundamentals of Bakery Production: Jan. 23-26 / Feb. 6-9 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Baking techniques applicable to the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies & cakes, with Free Baking Cookbook. P4,000.
Cake Decorating: Jan. 20 and 27 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fundamentals of cake decorating; coloring, icing (boiled, caramel, chocolate, sugar, simple fondant icing); basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flowers including bunching techniques. Individual workshop on icing application & cake designing. P3,500.
Catering Seminar: Jan. 24-26 (W-F) 2 - 6 p.m. Legal & technical aspect to get started in catering business, facilities, personnel, menu including portioning and quantification. Actual cooking preparation of Stuffed Chicken Thighs, Vegetable Samosa, Honey Garlic Ribs & Wings, Eggplant Skordalia, Quiche Lorraine & Peking Chicken Bites with free catering cookbook. P3,000.

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at *mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph*

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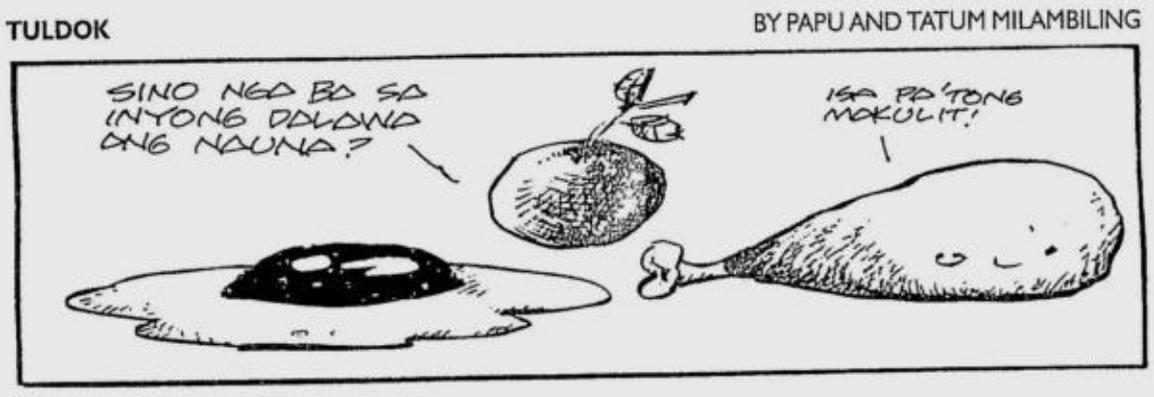
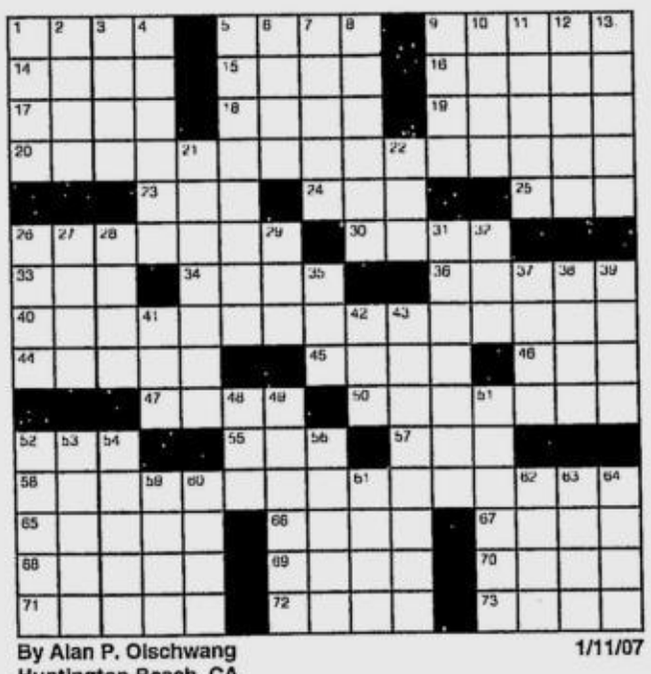


BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

1/11/07

ACROSS
1 Bear constellation
5 Wander
9 Spirit
14 Look intently
15 Leer at
16 Diameter halves
17 Well-known cartel
18 Mine finds
19 Round gasket
20 Start of Evan Esar quip
23 Bird's beak
24 Sundial X
25 New York pro
26 Added on
30 Lenient
33 Keanu in "The Matrix"
34 Eye drop
36 Mountain nymph
40 Part 2 of quip
44 Goose genus
45 Old Testament prophet
46 Jabber
47 Adolescent
50 Merciful ones
52 Sound of a leak
55 Birth certificate datum
57 4-stringed guitar
58 End of quip
65 Grouse
66 Seed cover
67 Wight or Skye
68 Old-time music systems
69 Singer Amos
70 Shuttle grp.
71 Cloys
72 Corporate VIP
73 Shrinking inland sea

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4 Known by only a few
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6 Folklore fiend
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9 Mature
10 Damage
11 Intense dislike
12 From then until now
13 Snug
21 Surface quality
22 John's Yoko
26 Writer Seton
27 Delon's nickname
28 Us is Paris
29 Aachen article
31 Turn one's back on
32 Play about Capote
35 Stephen of "Citizen X"
37 Border
38 Culture medium
39 Cotillion gals
41 Bottom line
42 Morning hrs.
43 Enter the open market
48 Best guess: abbr.
49 Cancel out
51 Eye part
52 Exhales audibly
53 Glacially produced grooves
54 Speedy
56 Big name in copies
59 Mayberry youngster
60 Scottish loch
61 Run out of steam
62 Russian ruler
63 Lohengrin's love
64 Actual

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

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R	I	S	E		P	O	P			L	I	N	E	R
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		C	A	T	O		S	E	R	A		S	O	I
	H	I	G	H	M	U	C	K	A	M	U	C	K	S
P	E	A	L	E		L	E	O	S		R	A	I	L
A	F	T	O	N		A	N	N	E		A	L	E	E
S	T	E	W	S		N	A	G	S		L	E	S	S

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1/11/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're disciplined, strong-willed and extremely capable. You can accomplish a lot because you're not afraid to take on big projects. You have strong morals for yourself and others. You have great research skills combined with an investigative mind. You're reliable. The year ahead will present you with an important decision. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Diana Gabaldon, author; Amanda Peet, actress; Ben Crenshaw, golfer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be asked to accept increased responsibilities for something now. Say "yes," because you will handle it with no trouble. VIPs and bosses notice you now. (Milk this for all it's worth.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Indulge every chance to explore travel plans or occasional opportunities. You want to broaden your horizons. You want more out of life. You want to live!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel more intensely about everything. Don't worry about this, because this influence will last only a few weeks. Focus on red-tape details about insurance, bills, debt and taxes.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Partnerships and close friendships are your primary focus at this time. These one-on-one relationships offer you a chance to learn more about yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Capitalize on your urge to get better organized in your life. Clean, paint, sort and pull your stuff together. Give yourself the right tools to do a good job.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You want to put play before work now. That's OK. Hard work and no play simply made Jack's widow rich. (You get the picture.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Home, family and real estate matters are your primary focus now. Do something to make where you live look more attractive. Buy a little gift for a family member.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your busy pace continues! Short trips, errands and conversations with siblings take up your time now. Shopping, buying and selling, and wheeling and dealing are the order of the day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're hung up on financial matters this week. Cash flow is important. You'll also enjoy shopping for yourself and loved ones. (Buy something that pleases you.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Three planets, including the Sun, are in your sign now. It's your turn to howl! People and opportunities will come your way. Be alert.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your busy pace, plus conflict with a friend, can exhaust you now. Therefore, take time to be alone. Enjoy solitude in beautiful surroundings.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Friendships are important now. Get out and schmooze! Work with groups. Form partnerships. Talk to others about your hopes for the future. Their feedback might be very helpful to you.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	3			7				1
6		7			8			
	8			5				
				1			4	
8		5	9	4	7	2		6
	2			3				
				6			8	
			3			9		2
4				9			5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

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1/11

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	7	6	8	9	1	3	4	5
4	1	9	3	7	5	2	6	8
5	8	3	6	2	4	1	9	7
9	2	5	7	3	8	6	1	4
1	3	8	4	6	9	7	5	2
6	4	7	1	5	2	8	3	9
8	6	2	5	4	3	9	7	1
7	5	1	9	8	6	4	2	3
3	9	4	2	1	7	5	8	6

Difficulty Level ★★★

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1/10

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Post-holiday reading list

CLAUDE Tayag's "Food Tour" illustration of diners at Tatoy's in Iloilo

TRENDY MAGAZINES USUALLY publish summer reading lists.

I have come up with my post-holiday reading recommendations. Some are gifts from friends who would rather give me food for thought. Others were purchased in-between gift-buying.

"Remembrance of Things Paris: 60 years of Writing from Gourmet" was tempting but I resisted for about six months because I still had so many books to read. I finally gave in and thank heaven for that.

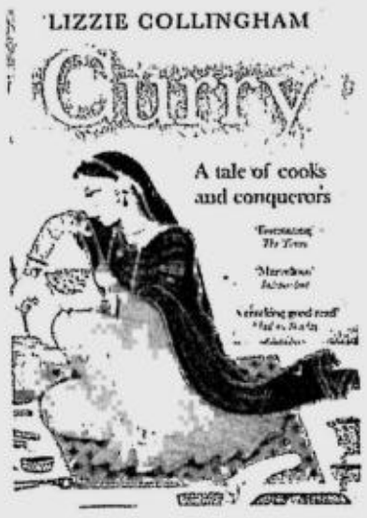
From war to haute cuisine

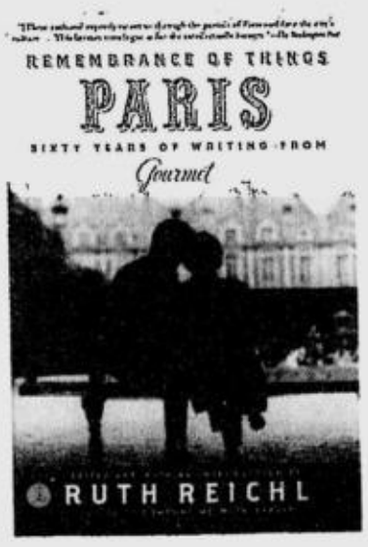
The articles span the period from after the war when rationing was still in effect in France through the restoration of haute cuisine and up till the beginnings of nouvelle cuisine.

But, while food was its main topic, the first article I read was on haute couture by Joseph Wechsberg. It's the kind of writing one aspires to, fluid and informative, making a world totally alien to me understandable.

The interviewee was Marc Bohan, designer of the House of Christian Dior in the '60s and '70s whose Slim Look and the Dr. Zhivago maxi coat are now part of couture history.

The anthology, produced from the many years of Gourmet Magazine's existence, is a project of the present editor, Ruth Reichl, best known for her three books of which "Tender at the Bone" is my favorite. I would also recommend the other book in the series, "Endless Feasts."





Here at home, friend and fellow food writer Claude Tayag has finally published a collection of his columns, "Food Tour" (Anvil Publishing, 2006). He illustrates the book through line drawings based on his photographs.

The recipes are a plus, some from places and friends he visited and others, his own concoctions because Claude is a known cook.

His "Roro" (roll-in roll-out boats) series of essays brought him from his house in Angeles, Pampanga through Mindoro, Iloilo, many cities and towns of Mindanao, Leyte, Samar, Bicol and Quezon.

For those of us who can take only one province at a time, his "Roro" essays can be a great guide to where to eat and stay and what to look out for.

I was told that some people attending a convention in Iloilo brought his column and asked the Department of Tourism to bring them to the places he mentioned.

He was kind enough to accompany me on one land trip from Cagayan de Oro to Bukidnon, Makilala in Cotabato to Davao City. It just took a little planning, a lot of appetite and an open mind.

Sense of adventure

I must also add that it takes an immense sense of adventure, especially when you go to places that aren't considered really safe.

At times, Claude sends text messages either to complain about a provincial guide's lack of food knowledge or to crow about some great eating. Some years back his message said he was drowning in heavenly *foie gras* in France.

It was uncanny that weeks later, I left for France myself. We did not meet up because he was on his way home and I was just starting my trip, but through him I got to meet his hosts, Filipino artists Offie Tequi and Juvenal Sanso, for an afternoon repast of champagne, cheese and chocolate cookies at Sanso's flat.

A cousin and her husband gifted me with "Chocolate: A Bittersweet Saga of Dark and Light" by Mort Rosenblum. The book traces the history of chocolate and includes stories about great artisans and connoisseurs.

As in all informal history, the anecdotes spice things up. For instance, British chocolate makers Fry and Cadbury were once partners. The friendship soured because of one of the partner's under-the-table deals with cacao-bean suppliers.

I've never been fond of chocolate and will only eat or drink it because, well, I'm expected to. But, because the book emphasizes that it's not the chocolate but the sugar that can make you fat and because of the many Japanese chocolates brought by a nephew and niece, I'm turning into a chocoholic.

Another cousin gave a book on Macedonian Cuisine from the place where he now lives and works. There's very little I know about the country, much less the cuisine. But the recipe book didn't help because it had no introduction to the cooking or a short explanation of how different the Skopje manner is from the Prilep manner.

What it has done is to make me more curious about the place and cooking but the research will have to wait until I get through the next book in my roster.

That's "Curry" by Lizzie Collingham. It's a history of India told through its food. I've read the chapters titled "Chicken Tikka Masala," "Biryani" and "Vindaloo" and realized that I learned so much more about India than a year of Asian history in college.

Finally, "Flavours" from the Peninsula Hotels is a recipe book that offers food for the eyes, as well.

Written by Singapore's Violet Oon, chefs from the eight Pen hotels contributed light and healthier dishes.

So which chef did what? It's anybody's guess, except for the Tiger Prawns Simmered in Tamarind Broth (*sinigang na sugpo*). For me, the best part of the book is at the back where you can learn kitchen techniques such as how to clean mature asparagus and artichoke, make tri-colored pasta, shell-cooked lobster, make garlic cream cappuccino and poach chicken in a vacuum bag. I may never get to do those things but it's good to know.

Philippine kitchens . . .

From page C1

of each banana leaf square.

• Fry until fritter is set—1 minute; lift from oil, remove banana leaf.

• Continue frying for another minute until the fritter is lightly browned. Flip and brown the other side until crisp, 1½-2 minutes.

• Drain on paper towel-lined baking sheet.

• Serve hot with the vinegar dipping sauce.

To reserve books in advance, call Queenie Cosay of A Different Bookstore, 0915-6597853.

Erratum

Remember Kape ni Juan? The coffee caterers that use 100-percent homegrown Pinoy beans? Silly of me to identify him as Patrick Uy. The name of the man behind the brilliant idea is Patrick Joson. Hayayay! So, so sorry Patrick! For his services, call 0917-5277141.

My class schedules are out. Call 9289296, 9273008, 7221691.

E-mail raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

BALDUCCI
Ristorante also sells Italian cheeses, hams, etc.

MEZZALUNA'S
Spring Rolls

The adventurous . . .

From page C4

Miguel's masterpieces, Valrhona Dark Chocolate Tartufo with Cherries.

Two for LJC

Journalist/restaurateur Larry J. Cruz, whose Café Adriatico has become a landmark in Malate, has come up with two projects—almost facing each other across the Serendra plaza. Larry's Espresso Bar claims to "go beyond trends by serving food and drinks not served in other coffee/chocolate bars and shops." Aside from its "spiked" drinks, the bar offers primarily snacks and light meals like soup, pastries and pies.

On the other hand, Abe (tel. 8560526), named after the restaurant owner's father, the respected and admired writer/artist/raconteur/gourmand E. Aguilar Cruz, serves old-fashioned Filipino food with a touch of the Kapampangan. It features the late artist's favorites like *biringhe* or rice *valenciana*, *betute* or stuffed farm frogs, *arobung kamaru* or sautéed rice field crickets, *pako* fern and tomato salad, and *pritong itu* or crisp-fried catfish served with a Pampanga relish called *balo-balo* and *mustasa* leaves. A corner of the dining room displays Abe memorabilia.

Duo is both a steakhouse and bar but that is not the reason for its name. For partners Larry Cortez and chef Mauro Arjona Jr., the name represents their assurance that, in their restaurant, diners will enjoy "a combination of excellent food and impeccable service." It must live up to its promise because former First Lady Imelda R. Marcos, a fastidious customer by all accounts, has been seen there a few times with an entourage.

You can't go wrong with the Steak and Foie Gras, US beef medallions topped with duck liver, port wine jus and served with potato and vegetable confit; and Steak and Escargot, Wagyu sirloin steak topped with sautéed escargot (snails) in garlic butter sauce and home fried potatoes.

Chateau's latest

Also specializing in Filipino food is Portico (tel. 8560581), the newest member of the Chateau 1771 Group of Restaurants. Signature dishes include Shrimp Cracker Salad, Tic Tac Prawns, Pan-fried Mameng. Not to be missed is the house specialty Spring Tofu. With the tried-and-tested Chateau name behind it, Portico is expected to become a favorite Serendra destination.

Filipinos who love *ihaw-ihaw* may want to try the Brazilian version, churrasco, at—where else?—Brazil. The grilled items, meats and poultry are more robustly flavored than the local varieties, giving the palate a slight taste of the vibrant, energetic carnival in Rio de Janeiro. Have all you can eat of the international buffet, including the wide array of the Brazilian barbecue served right at your table.

L'Opera, a favorite at the Greenbelt area before its major overhaul, has not only relocated but has launched a new project at Serendra, Balducci Ristorante (tel. 8997322, 8990943), which serves Italian food with a modern twist. It is also an Italian delicatessen, selling cheeses, sausages, etc.

For Balducci, the people behind L'Opera have partnered with Barolo Lifestyle Store (tel. 8560679), heretofore a wholesaler of wines, flatware, crystals, linen, oils and other dining essentials, servicing primarily local hotels and restaurants.

But now proprietors Sally and Luciano Zanirato, in anticipation of Serendra's being a full-fledged residential area, has gone into retailing. A second-floor room serves as Balducci's venue for small private or corporate events, offering something different for highlight—wine-tasting and/or a seminar on wines.

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Sylvia Reynoso-Gala — Gold Medalist, Academia de Gastronomos, Madrid, Spain – 1964; Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand; Studied in 6 Cooking Schools in Hongkong

Morella Reynoso Gala — Valedictorian, I.H.M.E.S, International Hotel School, United Kingdom – 1992; Studied Cooking at Le Cordon Bleu, London; ALSO TEACHES AT # 25 GLADIOLA ST. UPPER Q.M., BAGUIO CITY TEL. # (074) 444-8844

Ernest Reynoso Gala — Graduate : Italian Institute for Advanced Culinary & Pastry Arts under Chef Director John Nocita, Soverato, Calebria, Italy; Graduate : Le Moulin de Mougins Alain Llorca, Cannes, France; Graduate : Ecole Ritz Escoffier, Paris Ritz Hotel, France; Graduate : Ecole Lenotre Pattisserie, Plaisir Cedex, France; Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand; Studied at Chopstick and Hongkong Town Gas Culinary Schools

Leni Reynoso-Araullo — Graduate : The Wilton School of Cake Decorating Lambeth & Australian, Chicago, U.S.A., October 2006; Graduate : Sugar Artistry from Nicholas Lodge, Owner-Founder of The International School of Confectionery, London, England and Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. given in Chicago October 2006. He is the Official Cake Stylist to the British Royal Family and Author of 12 books. Masters in Cake Decorating, Wilton School, Chicago, U.S.A., 1974 under Martha & Stanley Wilton; Graduate : Gumpaste & Fondant w/ Colette Peters, Oct. 05 Advanced Workshop w/ Colette Peters, Chicago, U.S.A. Nov. 05 (Considered by Wilton & Lifestyle Channel as the World's #1 Cake Decorator); Graduate : Chicago School of Cooking and Catering Graduate : Full Course, Thai Cooking School at the Oriental Hotel, Bangkok; Studied cooking in Europe, South America & Hongkong; Co-founder, Reynoso Cooking and Baking School, March, 1963; WILTON METHOD INSTRUCTOR, in the U.S.A. and the Philippines

JAN 15 MON 1:30 - 5:30PM - ALL NEW ROASTS & PASTAS COURSE II. BY ERNEST. P1,800. CHATEAUBRIAND W/ BERNAISE SAUCE; MONTEREY ROAST RACK OF LAMB W/ CREAMY CUCUMBER SAUCE; TANDER ROAST BABY BACK PORK RIBS W/ SPECIAL BBQ SAUCE; BAKED LASAGNA W/ RICOTTA & MAGNOLIA MOZARELLA CHEESES; SPECIAL MAGNOLIA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ 4 CHEESES. PLUS MANY BONUS RECIPES OF DIFERENT SAUCES & GRAVIES FOR MEAT & PASTAS!

JAN 16 TUE 1:30 - 5:00PM - LEARN 6 SUGAR-FREE YUMMY RECIPES MADE WITH EQUAL SPOONFUL & 4 COFFEESHOP BESTSELLERS MADE W/ REGULAR SUGAR! - DELICIOUS SUGAR-FREE CHICKEN BARBECUE W/ SALAD GREENS W/ VINAIGRETTE DRESSING; SUGAR-FREE POLVORON; SUGAR-FREE MANGO CHEESECAKE; SUGAR-FREE ORANGE CHEESECAKE; CHOCO CHEESECAKE; ALMOST SUGAR-FREE OATMEAL WALNUT COOKIES; REGULAR COFFEE CHOCO BARS; STARBUCK'S STYLE RAISIN WALNUT OATMEAL COOKIES & CHOCO CHIP WALNUT OATMEAL COOKIES. P2,500. BY ERNEST

JAN 17 WED 1:30 - 5:30PM - NEW SOUPS & SEAFOOD COURSE BY ERNEST. P1,800. SHRIMP CHOWDER; FRENCH ONION SOUP; NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER; ROCK LOBSTER THERMIDOR; CHARCOAL-GRILLED TUNA BELLY W/ TERIYAKI SAUCE; POACHED WHOLE TUNA W/ HERB MAYO. PLUS 10 BONUS RECIPES OF SUPER GOOD SAUCES FOR FISH & SEAFOOD!

JAN 18 THU 1:30 - 5:00PM - CHINESE COOKING. ROAST MONTEREY PORK LIEMPO, *MRS. OLIVIA TEE'S* FOOKIEN STYLE AMOY FRESH LUMPIA; PORK SIOMAI W/ QUAIL EGGS; HONGKONG SHRIMP SIOMAI; HACAO (SHRIMP DUMPLING W/ HOMEMADE CLEAR WRAPPER). P1,800. BY SYLVIA

JAN 19 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - 8 GUARANTEED NEW JUMBO COOKIES & BAR 1. REVEL BARS, MACADAMIA NUT BARS; DECADENT BROWNIES; WHITE PLATTER-SIZED COOKIES; PEANUT BUTTER JUMBOS; BIGGIE FRISBEE COOKIES; CHOCO OATMEAL COOKIES; SUPER FUDGY BROWNIES. P1,800. BY ERNEST. ALL MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH GOODIES! IDEAL FOR BAKESHOP OWNERS & STAFF.

JAN 20 SAT 1:30 - 5:30PM - POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES II. LEARN 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES! SHABU-SHABU W/ 2 SAUCES. ASSORTED CRISPY TEMPURA; GRILLED PORK & BEEF SLICE; UDON (VERY SPECIAL NOODLES); FRIED TOFU IN SPECIAL SAUCE; BREADED CHICKEN WINGS W/ VINEGAR SAUCE; JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF COMPLETE SUSHI BAR. P1,800.

JAN 22 MON 1:30 - 5:30PM - 6 INDIVIDUAL SIZED EUROPEN CAKES & DESSERTS II. BY ERNEST. P1,800. MINI BUNDT CAKES DRENCHED IN ORANGE SYRUP. BUTTERSCOTCH CAKES W/ CARAMELIZED TOPPING; LITTLE CHOCO CAKES W/ HOT FUDGE; UNBELIEVABLY GOOD BANANA LOAF CAKE; SMALL CARROT CAKES W/ RICOTTA CHEESE TOPPING; ITALIAN PUDDING IN CUSTARD CUPS. (ALL LEARNED IN EUROPE)

JAN 23 TUE 1:30 - 4:30PM - EASY HONGKONG RESTAURANT COURSE. SIZZLING CHINESE STYLE STEAKS W/ MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN; SHRIMP & CRAB CLAWS & BALLS IN NEST W/ SWEET & SOUR SAUCE; HONGKONG STYLE ASSORTED VEGETABLE PLATTER; MAGNOLIA STIR FRIED CHICKEN BREAST W/ CASUY; LAPA-LAPU IN CREAM OF CORN SAUCE; LOURDES FAT CRABS COOKED IN GINGER-GARLIC SPRITE. P1,800. BY SYLVIA & ERNEST

JAN 24 WED 1:30 - 5:45PM - 7 AUTHENTIC ITALIAN BREAD & PASTAS. BY ERNEST. P2,500. SOFT BREAD STICKS; FOCACCIA; CIABATTA; SAUSAGE CALZONE (YURNOVERS); STROMBOLI; SPAGHETTI CON VONGOLE (CLAMS); SPAGHETTI CON POLPETTE ALLA CASALINGA (GOLF BALL SIZED MEATBALLS). IDEAL FOR PIZZA PARLOR OWNERS & STAFF.

JAN 25 THU 1:30 - 6:00PM - CHINESE COOKING - PATA TIM (BRAISED PORK SHOULDER); SPICED CHILI CRABS; PATO TIM (BRAISED DUCK W/ VEGETABLES); SWEET & SOUR PORK YANCHOW FRIED RICE; SPICY PRAWNS; CANDIED BANANAS DIPPED IN ICE. BY SYLVIA. P1,800

JAN 26 FRI 1:30 - 5:15PM - 9 GUARANTEED NEW SPECIAL COOKIES & BARS II. BY ERNEST. P1,800. MISSISIPPI MUD BARS. ROCKY ROAD BROWNIES; CHUNKY OATMEAL BARS; HEAVENLY DATE BARS; PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIES; MARSHMALLOW COOKIES; RICOA CHOCO IN FLAKY CUPS; PANDAN CRESCENTS; RUM BALLS. (COFFEESHOP & BAKESHOP OWNERS & STAFF)

JAN 29 MON 1:30 - 5:00PM - 9 SPECIAL BARBECUE - BEEF TERIYAKI IN SKEWERS; PORK SPARERIBS W/ HOISIN SAUCE; MAGNOLIA CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS IN HONEY SAUCE; (SATE A JAM) CHICKEN SKEWERS IN PEANUT SAUCE; BEEF RIBS W/ PEKING NOODLES; DELICIOUS SPARERIBS; NEW KOREAN BEEF BARBECUE; NASIGORENG (INDONESIAN FRIED RICE); *FERNANDO MIGUEL ERENETA'S* CHICKEN HONEY; THE BEST PORK BARBECUE W/ SPECIAL PEANUT SAUCE. P1,800. BY ERNEST

JAN 30 TUE & FEB 1 THU - 1:30 - 4:30PM - P2,200. MONEY MAKING CHOCOLATE FANTASIES COURSE. (#1 SELLER IN MANILA). CHOCOLATE COATED POPCORNS; CREAM-FILLED CUPCAKES; STICKY WALNUT BROWNIES, CHUNKY CHOCO COOKIES; GERMAN STLE FUDGY CAKE W/ ICING. CHOCOLATE TURTLE CHEESECAKE; SMOOTH CHOCOLATE MOUSSE; SYRUPY BROWNIES; WALNUT CRUNCH BROWNIES; ROCKY ROAD BROWNIES. THE BEST MELTS - IN - THE - MOUTH TIRAMISU#2 BY ERNEST

JAN 31 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM - CHINESE ROAST PORK ASADO; CHICKEN W/ CHESTNUTS, ROAST PORK SPARERIBS; TARO PUFF SHRIMPS; QUAIL EGGS W/ SHRIMPS & MUSHROOMS, FISH IN SWEET SAUCE; SMOKED SOY CHICKEN, GLUTINOUS RICE BALLS DIPPED IN COCONUT FLAKES. PLUS MANY BONUS RECIPES P1,800. BY SYLVIA

FEB 2 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - OPEN A PIZZA PARLOR - LEARN TO MAKE THESE ITALIAN FAVORITES. MOZARELLA-TOPPED BIG & THICK CRUST PIZZA (BAKED IN A RECTANGULAR PAN) THIN CRUST PIZZA W/ DIFFERENT TOPPINGS; FETTUCINE ALFREDO; SPAGHETTI; CARBONARA; BREADED VEAL STEAKS W/ LEMON; PEACH-FILLED CREPES W/ FRUIT SAUCE PLUS 12 BONUS RECIPES OF PASTAS & SANDWICHES. P1,800. BY ERNEST

FEB 3 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN. JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN W/ GRAVY. CHICKEN BURGER, DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD; SIZZLING GRILLED PORK CHOPS, FOUR SEASONS PUNCH; RIPE MANGO MELON TAPIOCA W/ SAGO; GREEN MANGO JUICE P1,800. BY ERNEST & SYLVIA

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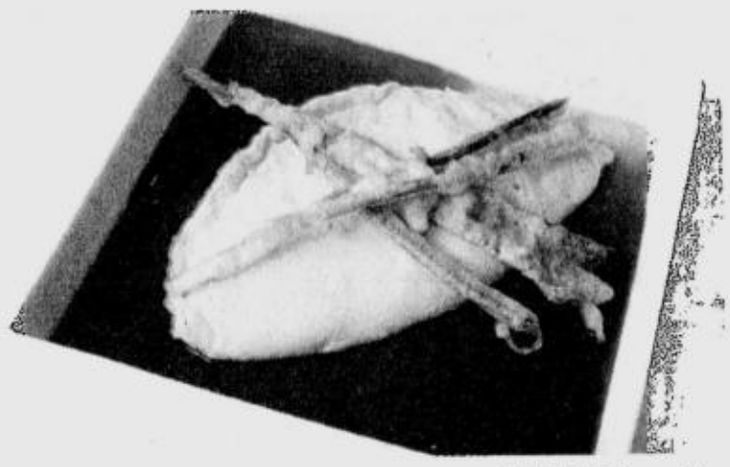
MIENG Kham at Thai at Silk

STEAK Escargot is a Duo signature dish.



A FANCIER omelet, filled with special Japanese tofu and with honey ginger sauce on top of the spring onion tempura

CHURRASCO Barbecue Platter from Brazil

SPECIAL pudding à la mode from Duo

A food exploration of Serendra promises to be a delightful experience for the taste buds

The adventurous foodie's new mecca

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

IF YOUR KIND OF ADVENTURE IS TRYing a new restaurant, then Serendra Piazza at the Fort, an Ayala Land Inc. development in Taguig City, should keep the adrenaline flowing for a while.

Whether you are looking for cuisine that is as smooth as silk, as bracing as the carnival in Rio de Janeiro, as comforting as *lola*'s favorites, as bright as the Mediterranean sun or anything in between, the growing number of eating places at Serendra in Bonifacio High Street may just have what you want.

Though the residences of the Ayala property have yet to be occupied, the commercial complex is already humming with activity offering an interesting mix of quaint, one-of-a-kind shops; a few establishments with proven track records and innovative dining places.

With many of the new restaurants backed by personalities and companies that have built a reputation for reliability and quality, undertaking a food exploration of Serendra promises to be a delightful experience for the taste buds.

Inspired creations

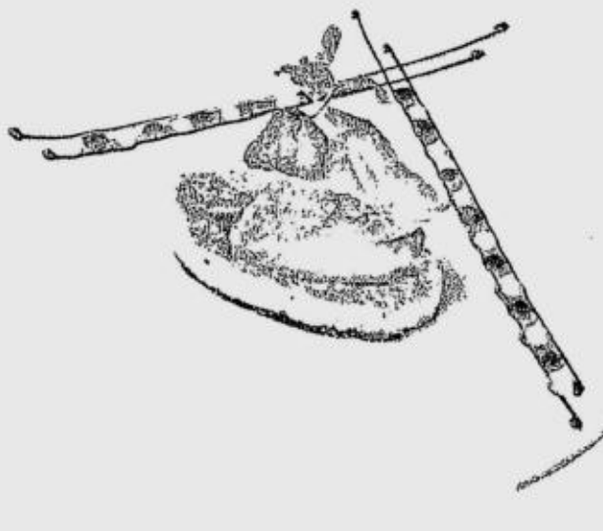
Start your culinary journey at the ground floor's Thai at Silk (tel. 8560386-87), whose interiors that blend old and new Asian décor echo the inspired creations of chef Cecille C. Ysmael. Some dishes may sound familiar, like Pad Thai and Tom Yum Kung, though they may look different as presented at Thai at Silk. But others may offer a completely new experience, like the appetizer Mieng Kham, a mix of palm sugar, ginger and grated coconut served on betel leaves. It is as close as you get to having the *nganga* that older Filipinos enjoyed.

The clean, elegant Asian interiors were done by Ysmael's partners, designing sisters Ivy and Cynthia Almario. Cecille and husband Louie Ysmael are the constant presence at the restaurant (other partners are Ching Cruz, Tanya Chua and Agnes Huibonhua), personally overseeing everything and making sure guests are accorded the hospitality that Asians, particularly Thais as well as Filipinos, are known for.

Whether you like your food authentically Thai hot and spicy or mild, you only have to ask for them to adjust it to your liking.

If it is Italian you crave, Australian-trained chef Carlo Miguel has opened the elegant 40-seater Mezzaluna (tel. 8560718, 8560697) to showcase his modern take on the popular European cuisine. Try the USDA Angus Bistro Fillet with Foie Gras Ravioli Mushrooms and Truffle Foam. For dessert, have one of

THE ADVENTUROUS/ C3



LOUIE and Cecille Ysmael, the hardworking couple behind Thai at Silk

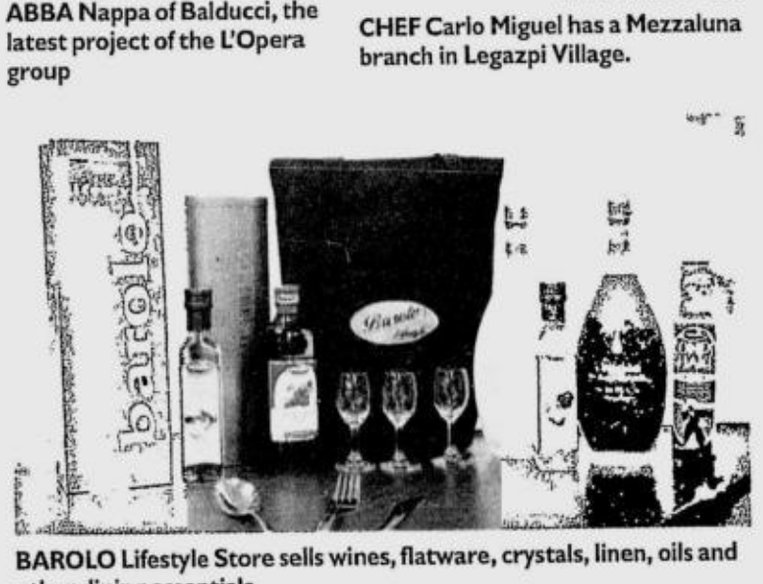
RICKY Gutierrez adds Portico to his list of restaurants.

MAE Basa of Brazil, which specializes in grilled dishes

ABBA Nappa of Balducci, the latest project of the L'Opera group

CHEF Carlo Miguel has a Mezzaluna branch in Legazpi Village.

PARTNERS Larry Cortez and chef Mauro Arjona Jr. of Duo



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For all courses mentioned above, please call the school for tuition fee details and other information.

There are only 14 slots in each batch so applicants are urged to register immediately.

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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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THE CAST of "Peter Pan" RUDY ESPERAS

Neverland 2007

By Cora Lucas

HERE'S NEVERLAND, 2007.

The story of the boy who spends his childhood on the island of Neverland gets a new twist in the 2007 Asian tour of "Peter Pan," mounted by the international theater company ABA Productions.

The musical version of the J.M. Barrie classic was approached by playwright Ben Munroe "with the contemporary audience in mind."

"The whole thing was rewritten, although I had to retain classic lines like 'To die would be an awfully big adventure' and 'Think good thoughts and kick off with your heels,'" Munroe told INQUIRER Entertainment on Tuesday. "Then I added a few fairies and new characters and flew the dog that was left [behind] out to Neverland."

But Munroe clarified that he was faithful to the spirit of the original.

"We created 'Peter Pan' in a way that you're going to find the people you love in a slightly different way," said Munroe, noting how they added a "fairy language"—a made-up language—in some scenes.

ABA auditioned around the globe to get the right mix of actors. Several child actors from Manila landed roles for the Philippine stop.

Notable in the cast is half-Fil-

NEVERLAND/ D2

Randy Jackson cornered

JENNIFER HUDson is "proof that you can make it, whether you win or not."

That is, whether you win on "American Idol" or not.

AI judge Randy Jackson fielded questions from the international press on Tuesday during a tele-conference supposedly on the new "Idol" season that begins Wednesday next week (Starworld, 8 p.m.). Jackson ended up answering questions, too, about Hudson's current success in the film adaptation of the hit Broadway musical "Dreamgirls."

Hudson was a semifinalist in the third (2004) season of AI, which

RANDY/ D2

The Real Causes of WOMEN'S HAIRLOSS

Hair can enhance or ruin a woman's appearance. Deemed her "crowning glory," thick, healthy, lush strands that frame a woman's face can emphasize her beauty and youth. On the contrary, hair loss can do the exact opposite. It can make a woman appear older and less attractive, which can cause low self-esteem, depression and isolation.

There are various triggers of women's baldness. Hormonal changes by far have the biggest impact since they stimulate hair growth *and* cause the actual hairloss. Female Pattern Baldness (or Androgenetic alopecia) is a reaction to male hormones in the body. It is an inherited sensitivity to the effects of male hormones (androgens) on scalp hair follicles.

Stress can also be a contributing factor to women's hairloss. This leads to a severe tension in the scalp, affecting the supply of essential nutrition required for the healthy growth of hair. Hair damage from the use of hair styling treatments and other chemicals also affects the hair condition, making the hair strands weak and causing them to break.

Svenson utilizes various treatments to help women avoid hairloss from occurring. In the case of hairloss that has already started, Svenson also has solutions to prevent it from progressing to more advanced hairloss. With Svenson, women not only get their hair back, they also look younger and better. Call Svenson today at 892-HAIR (4247) for a free consultation.

Advt.

RODEL ROTONI

ELY BUENDIA

Manager: Heart attack could have killed Ely

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ROCKER ELY BUENDIA WAS ONSTAGE WITH his band Pupil when he had a heart attack on Sunday night.

This was relayed to INQUIRER Entertainment by Day Cabuhat, who co-manages the band with Diane Ventura, Buendia's girlfriend.

"His doctors believe his heart was no longer functioning properly then," Cabuhat recalled. "Still, he finished that show in Lagu-

MANAGER/ D2

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1	ROB-B-HOOD	2:25, 5:10, 7:55, 10:40 PG-13
2	BLOOD DIAMOND	1:55, 5:05, 8:15, 11:10 R-13
3	ERAGON	1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00 G
4	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13

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ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:35,3:05,5:35, 8:05,10:30	GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:40,4:40,7:40,10:35
ERAGON G 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:00,9:20	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO PG13 1:20,3:30,5:40, 7:50,10:00	ERAGON G 1:00,3:20,5:40, 8:00,10:20

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1 ERAGON • THX
2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30

2 BLOOD DIAMOND
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

4 ERAGON
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

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6 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 MANO PO 5
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

10 LIGALIG
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

TERMITA 538-7809 to 12

1 ERAGON
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:35 9:00

2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 BLOOD DIAMOND
12.35 3:40 6:45 9.50

4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12.30 2:50 5.10 7:30 10:00

6 ROB-B-HOOD
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 ERAGON
12:30 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

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1 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20

3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

4 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:35 6:20 9:05

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:00 6.40 9:00

6 ERAGON
11:00 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00

7 ERAGON
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

8 BLOOD DIAMOND
11:20 2:30 5:40 9.00

NOVALICHES

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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1 ERAGON
1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20

2 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:05 2.55 5:45 8.35

3 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20

4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

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1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 LIGALIG
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KAMASUTRA 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

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2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
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3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 ERAGON

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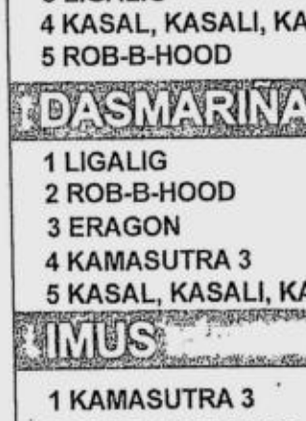
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ERAGON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3/SHAKE RATTLE
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6 THE RETURN

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 THE RETURN
5 KAMASUTRA 3
6 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS



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Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 ERAGON
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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ROB-B-HOOD
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BLOOD DIAMOND
CINEMA 2
ERAGON
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1 ERAGON
2 MANO PO 5
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ROB-B-HOOD
7 ERAGON
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 ERAGON
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
8 MANO PO 5
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 LIGALIG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 ROB-B-HOOD
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 MANO PO 5

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
8 LIGALIG
9 MANO PO 5
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 ERAGON
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
9 MANO PO 5

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ERAGON
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ERAGON
7 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 MANO PO 5
11 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON

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2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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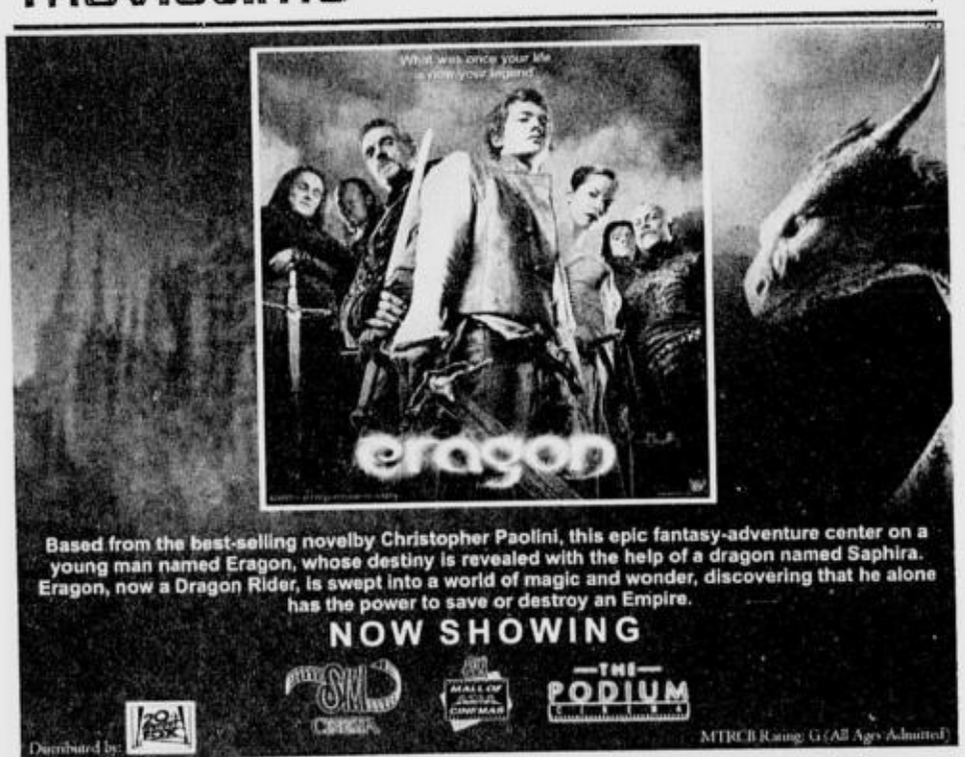

Based from the best-selling novelby Christopher Paolini, this epic fantasy-adventure center on a young man named Eragon, whose destiny is revealed with the help of a dragon named Saphira. Eragon, now a Dragon Rider, is swept into a world of magic and wonder, discovering that he alone has the power to save or destroy an Empire.

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6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 MANO PO 5
8 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

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1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2 ERAGON
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ERAGON
3 THE NATIVITY
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON

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2 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BOA
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 ROB-B-HOOD

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WHAT A COINCIDENCE THA
rek **Lino Cayetano's** birthday
4) is two days before **Sharon C**
ta's (Jan. 6)! After I broke the
about Lino seeing KC, the
Mom said on TV: "*Si Lino dapa*
magsalita."

Timing is of the essence:
has reasons for keeping t
hush-hush for now. Maybe
KC is back in Paris, where
studies, Lino's lovesickness
prod him to spill his heart
He'll miss (her) and tell!

A gay friend made this
comment about the budding
Lino romance. "Direk's ex Bi
Gonzales and KC both have s
poo commercials. *Dapat si* Lin
'cause he's got long hair, too
line of Bianca in her ad is so *ba*
what happened between her
Lino: "*Walang* Take 2. Can't
the damage." Ad, *este*, art im
life?

Guess who?

The organizer of a corp
show was pissed at this fema
star because she brought al
battalion of back-up dancers.
had agreed on five, but the or
er decided he had no choice
feed them all.

When he was about to s
runner to a fast-food chain, M
Personality protested, insistin
her dancers be given hotel foo
hers. A prod staff member la

'Kasal' beats 'E

"KASAL, KASALI, KASAL
top-grossing film in this y
Manila Film Festival, with
lion by the end of the fest
week run on Sunday. Ear
"Enteng Kabisote 3" con
in second, with P128 m
lion. The third to ninth slo
"Shake, Rattle & Roll
P57M; "Matakot Ka sa
ma," P23M; "Mano Po
Gua Ai Di," P22M; "Sup
Noypi," P19M; "Zsazsa Z
P11M; "Ligalig," P7.96M

Manager:

From page D1

na." The gig ended early, a
p.m., but Buendia had anoth
ment. "He was on his way to
when he complained that
pain."

Buendia was rushed to
Hospital in Alabang, where
en an emergency angioplast

Cabuhat recounted that
who led the groundbrea
Eraserheads in the 1990s,
very busy during the recen
"He had gigs for two consecu
before the attack."

Cabuhat said Ely's famil

Neverland,

ipino, half-American Eric I
plays one of the lost boys. Eric
a similar role during the m
run in Hong Kong three years

Another Filipino, Mayna
lano, plays pirate Bo'sun Blac

The choreographer, Kitty C
so Filipino.

The UST Action Singers
semble dished out a sample
language" in a musical nun
Sofitel Philippine Plaza on T
cast also performed some exc

Peter Pan will be played al
15-year-old half-Chinese,
Michael Lin and 13-year-ol
Ryutaro Yanigita.

Randy Jacks

was won by Fantasia Barrino.
ing year, Hudson was cast as
in "Dreamgirls," a role for wh
has a chance to win major act
In contrast, Barrino's career s
trouble taking off.

Jackson recalled that he s
potential, so that after she wa
before the semifinals, he pick
wildcard. Hudson returned t
and for a while it looked lik

Flying drago

From page D4

goodness finally rules the land

As you can see, aside fron
rider element, the story isn't all
Another liability is the movi
low and slow progression,
than charismatic portrayal of
as Eragon further holds the film

Other downers: Malkovich's
the evil ruler is disappointingl
cal, and the actor cast as his su
isn't much better. And the film
fects-laden finale is visually n
dictable in conceptualization

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For Lino Cayetano's ex, ad imitates life: 'Can't undo the damage!'

DI- Jan. une- news lega ang

Lino ings when she will out.

razy KC- anca nam- o din The ay to and undo tates

orate e TV ng a They aniz- ut to

nd a is TV that l, like nent-

ed, *"Ang dami niyang* demands, *grabe!"*

They had no back-up funds for the back-up dancers. For sure, Ms TV Personality's prima donna ways will backfire sooner or later.

Christmas couples

• I asked **Marvin Agustin** and **Pauleen Luna** about how they spent their very first Christmas as a couple. Marvs exclaims, "It was the best Christmas I ever had." Pauleen says, "Simple but meaningful. *Basta nung eve nasa akin si* Marvs."

By keeping details to themselves, the sacredness of the memory is preserved. What about Marvin's twins? Pauleen hasn't met them but she is dying to. "I wanted to send *nga* his kids gifts but *dyahe pa ko.*"

Pauleen has nothing to worry about. She must bear in mind that Marvin's kids occupy a separate ventricle in his heart and so does she.

• **Ruffa Mae Quinto** and **Erik Santos** also had their first Christmas together. She gushes, "We went to Thailand. Super eat *kami ng* Thai food. I gave him a professional digital cam so feeling fotog *siya* now *at panay kuha ng* pix. *Di tuloy kami pinapasok sa isang* event *dun dahil sobrang laki ng* camera *niya.* He gave me a branded evening gold bag with chain which I've long wanted."

Oh! That "Christmas is us" feeling!

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

On-air proposal

I asked **Jennylyn Mercado** how she felt about **Patrick Garcia's** proposing to her on the air (in "S-Files" via phone patch). She smiles. "Pat inspires me but priority *ko pa din ang* career." Pat says he's willing to wait. But from the looks of it, they are already a couple. Sometimes it's better not to label relationships. After all, the deepest feelings can't be contained as if our hearts were jars.

Too busy

Angel Locsin insists that one of the causes of her split-up with **Oyo Boy Sotto** is their lack of time for each other. That's sad. But when you really think about it, can you be too busy for people you truly care for? You may not have enough time but as long as you have enough love, then you'll get by.

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They can accumulate points, get instant "BigAtin" discounts and even extend the rewards of their hard-earned "BigAtin" card to their family back home.

The program, which is already on the fast track in the Middle East, will be launched in Japan (February), in Australia and North America (March) and in Europe (April).

Concert for Chin Chin

"Cheers to Life" is a fund-raising concert for the family of actress **Chin Chin Gutierrez**, whose house burned down before Christmas.

It is set Jan. 15 at Merks Greenbelt 3. Call 7574720-21.

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.

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4 BLOOD DIAMOND MTRCB. R-13 12.30, 3.40, 6.50, 10.00
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CINEMA 5 BLOOD DIAMOND 10:30, 1:25, 4:20, 7:15, 10:10 R-13
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	FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC.116	

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

'Enteng'

)" IS THE ar's Metro P139 million val's two- y leader ies il- s: 8," ar- 5: er aturnnah," and "Tat-long Baraha," P3.96M.

DID YOU KNOW...

The final ranking and figures were provided by Ric Camaligan, MMFF executive committee member. "This will not change the Best Picture, however," said Camaligan. "Enteng" was named Best Picture on Dec. 29, based on a criterion of 40 percent commercial viability.

Total MMFF earnings is P414 million.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

Heart attack ...

ound 7:30 er appoint- a meeting he was in the Asian he was giv- Buendia, ing band had been holidays. tive nights v, Ventura

and their 6-year-old son Eon, Pupil members Dok Sergio, Bogs Yugo and Yan Yuzon were the only ones allowed to visit. "The hospital has a very strict policy on visitors, but messages and calls from supporters and fellow musicians have been overwhelming."

At press time, Buendia was still in the intensive care unit and there were reports he would be transferred to another hospital for a second angioplasty.

Cabuhat said the doctors were optimistic. "Ely is young (36); He's young; they also believe it helped him survive what could've been a fatal attack."

2007

From page D1

barra, who 14, played sical's first ago. d Marcel- ortez, is al- Alumni En- f the "fairy mber. at the esday. The rpts. ernately by half-British l Japanese

Munroe said the foundation of the show is the music, which should be credited to UK-based composer Karl Jenkins and Filipino musical director Amuer Calderon.

Calderon, who has been doing musical theater in Hong Kong for the past 12 years, has written six songs for this "Peter Pan," plus some "incidental" music and underscores for some parts.

The musical runs for a little less than two hours including intermission.

"Peter Pan" goes onstage Fridays (starting tomorrow), Saturdays and Sundays. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., until Feb. 4 at the CCP Main Theater. Call 891-9999 or visit www.ticketworld.com.ph.

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son cornered

From page D1

The follow- Effie White ch she now ng awards. ms to have v Hudson's eliminated d her as his the show, she could

have a shot at the title.

Confronted with comments that Hudson should probably have won AI's 2004 edition, Jackson was quick to defend Barrino. He said Fantasia's memorable rendition of "Summertime" was still the best performance on the show to date.

"American Idol" is the highest-rating reality talent search program in the United States.

Kathryn Fatima L. Reyes

n steals the scene

gain. its dragon hat unique. 's relatively nd the less Ed Speelers back. portrayal of stereotypi- per-sorcerer s special ef- h, but pre- and execu-

tion.

On the plus side, the film's production design is imaginative and textured. And best of all, the digital rendering of Saphira, the flying dragon, is beautifully and excitingly realized.

The engaging digital creature is also winningly voice-acted by Rachel Weisz and comes across as admirably strong but also warmly caring.

"Eragon" can be viewed and enjoyed for these plus points. But, we wish that the second film in this new trilogy is more creatively, excitingly and uniquely realized.

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	HAPPY FEET 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 1:40 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:40	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9.40
		ERAGON 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

ALIMALL 5

ERAGON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30	ROB-B-HOOD 12:40 / 3:30 / 5:20 / 8:10	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 12:35 / 2:30 / 5:25 / 8:20
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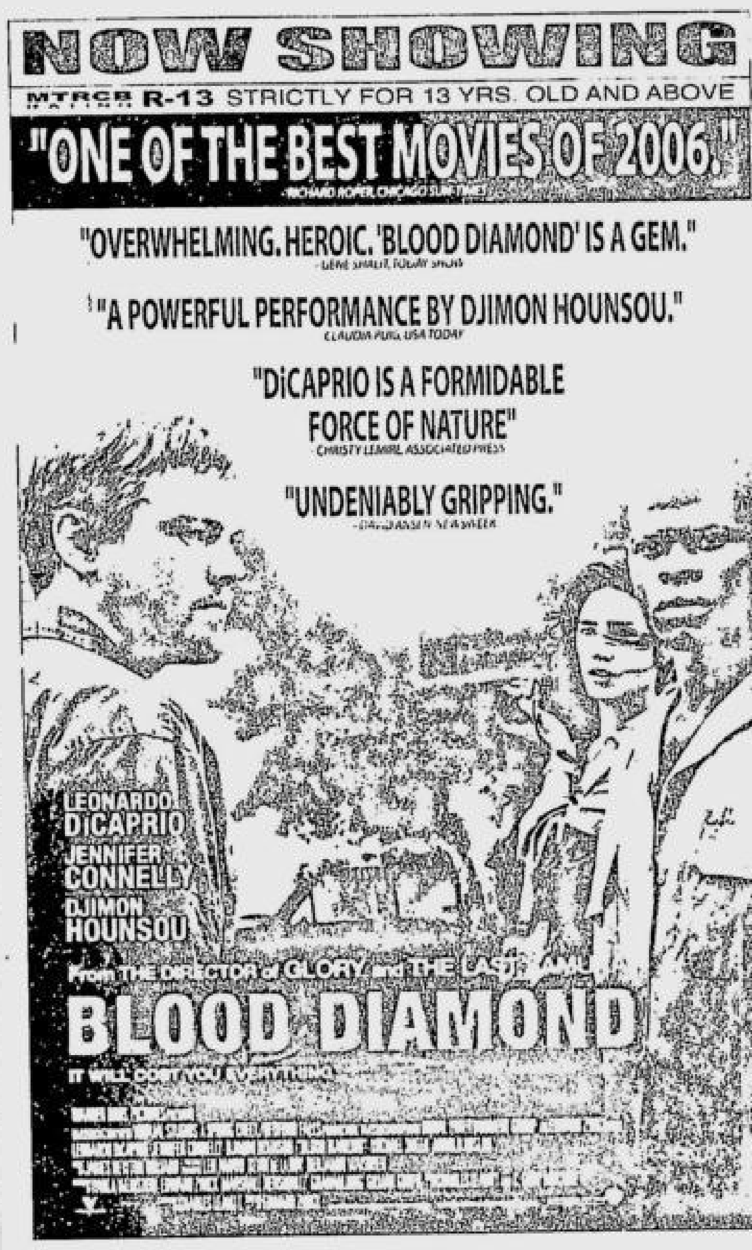

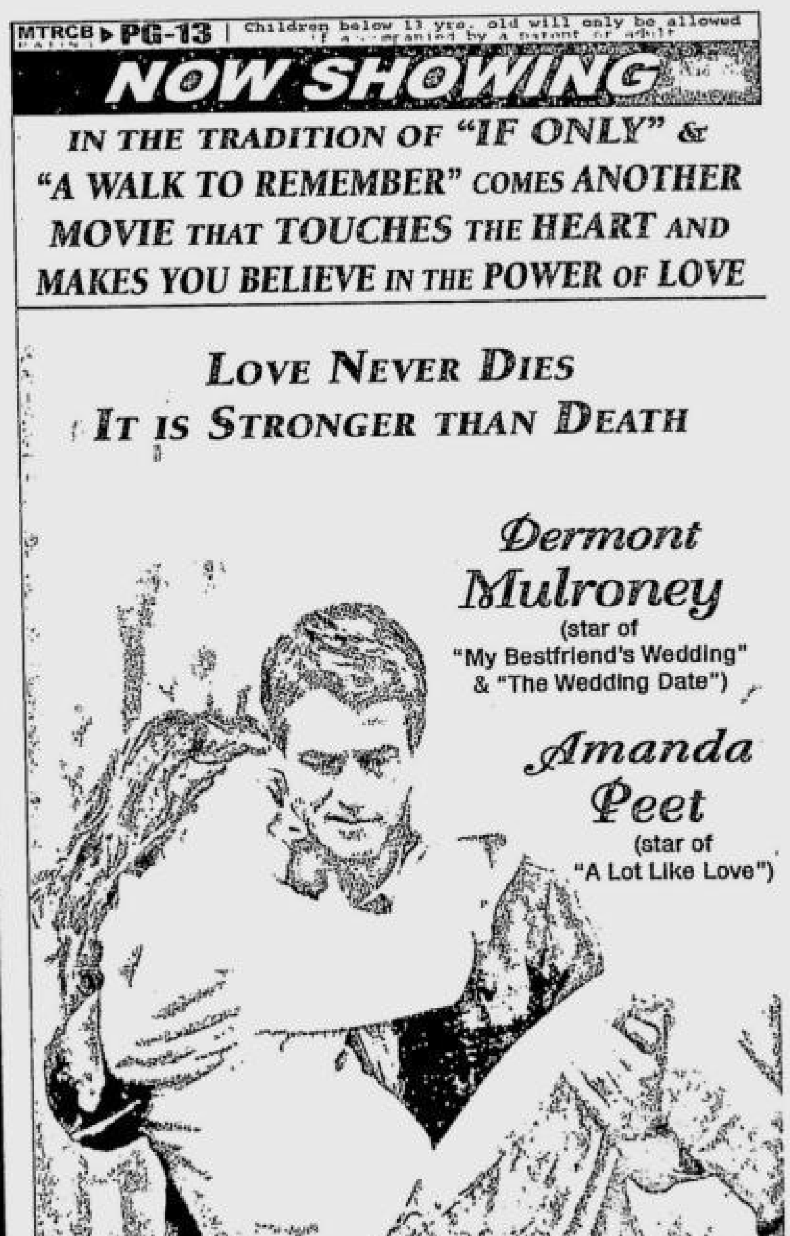

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Flying dragon steals the scene

AFTER "THE LORD OF THE RINGS," IT'S THE nth time the eternal struggle between good and evil.

turn of the "Inheritance Trilogy" to have its serial run on the movie screen. Like the "Rings" cycle, the new trilogy written by **Christopher Paolini** is set in a fanciful wonderworld of larger-than-life heroes and super-sorceress, restaging for the

The trilogy's first installment, "Eragon," focuses on the fictive but exciting world of dragon riders, true-blue defenders of the oppressed who ride flying dragons that spew out fire, burning their dastardly foes to a crisp.

At film's start, the land is ruled by a veteran dragon rider gone terribly wrong. He has killed all other dragon riders so he can rule his kingdom without opposition.

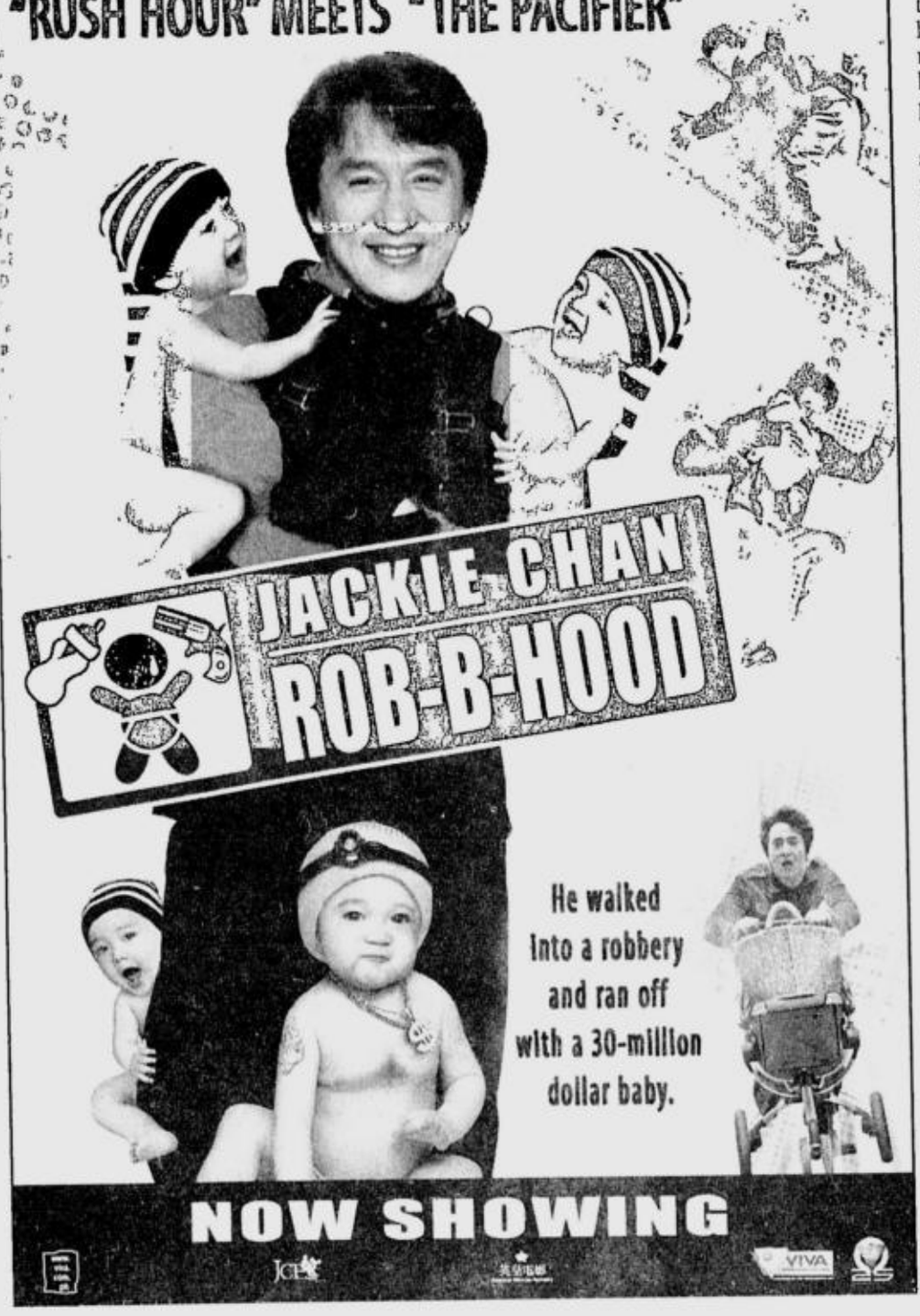
Hope of redress springs anew after a young farm boy named Eragon discovers a dragon's egg in a forest. A flying dragon is born, Eragon names it Saphira and the boy and magical beast forge a secret partnership that will eventually enable goodness to triumph over evil once more.

To help Eragon, another dragon rider (played by Jeremy Irons) is sent to keep him out of harm's way. But the evil ruler (John Malkovich) and his super-sorcerer are no pushovers, and strive to foil them at every turn.

Eragon gains his key advantage when Saphira comes into full possession of her powers. Astride the formidable dragon, Eragon teams up with a ragtag army of rebels, and they confront the evil ruler's army on the battlefield.

Before good can vanquish evil, however, Eragon and his allies suffer at the all-powerful hands of the ruler's super-sorcerer. It's only when Eragon makes full use of *his* superpowers that the evil foe meets his match, and

FLYING/ D2



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GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND		2 ERAGON		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	4 ROB-B-HOOD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS		
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GREENBELT: Greenbelt 3: Convergence of Beauty & Nature Exhibit, January 11 to 14, 2007

Greenbelt Onstage: Repertory Philippines presents MOOSE MURDERS at REP's Globe Theater - January 12 to 28, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

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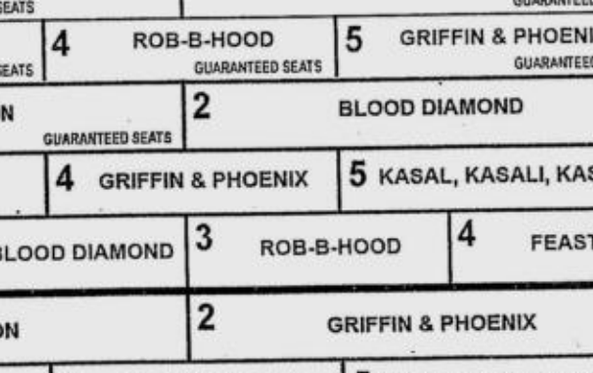

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MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

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SPORTS / A23

WBC approves
Barrera-Marquez fight; Pacquiao asked to wait

BUSINESS / B1

RP raked in $2.6B
in 'hot money,' up by 24% from a year ago

ENTERTAINMENT / E4

'Idol' loser Jennifer Hudson
on brink of fame as Golden Globe Best Supporting Actress

LIVING STARS/ F4

Tour home of singer-actress
Ara Mina, who's also an amateur decorator

UN rights body backs RP vs int'l milk firms

By Christian V. Esguerra

NO LESS THAN THE UNITED NATION'S COMmission on Human Rights is backing the Philippine campaign against giant, international milk formula companies.

The commission's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food has written Ambassador Enrique Manalo, permanent Philippine representative at

UN RIGHTS/ A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, January 12, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 35 P18 website: inquirer.net

Green gas: GMA signs biofuels bill into law

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS signed the Biofuels Act of 2006 more than a month after Congress passed the landmark bill mandating the use of fossil fuel alternatives in all motor vehicles.

In a brief interview with reporters in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo said she signed the

GREEN/ A8

Salonga raps CA justice over misquote

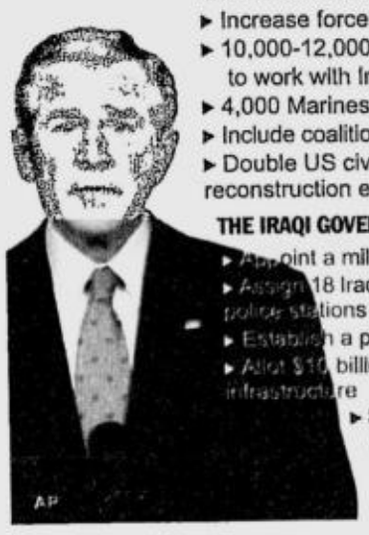
By Norman Bordadora

COURT OF APPEALS JUSTICE APOLINARIO Bruselas may be held criminally liable for violating the Revised Penal Code by misquoting US jurisprudence in connection with the custody case of convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, according to former Senate President Jovito Salonga.

Salonga, a professor of law with a doctorate from Yale University, told the INQUIRER that the basis for the appellate court's Jan. 3 deci-

SALONGA/ A9

Bush plan highlights The president called for an increase of American involvement in Iraq, saying the Iraqis must take a larger role in both securing and reconstructing their country.



THE PRESIDENT ALSO CALLS FOR THE US TO:
- Increase force levels by 21,500 troops
- 10,000-12,000 troops to Baghdad to work with Iraqi forces
- 4,000 Marines to Anbar Province
- Include coalition brigade with each Iraqi army force
- Double US civilian worker force to coordinate reconstruction efforts; add to US diplomatic corps.

THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT WILL/MUST:
- Appoint a military commander and two deputies
- Assign 18 Iraqi military brigades to work from local police stations to win civilian trust
- Establish a police brigade in nine districts
- Allot $10 billion towards reconstruction and infrastructure
- Share oil revenues with Iraqi citizens
- Hold elections this year; reform debathification laws

Bush admits mistakes but plans troop buildup in Iraq

WASHINGTON—MOVING AGAINST WIDEspread antiwar passions among Americans and the advice of some top generals, President George W. Bush announced on Wednesday that he was increasing US troops in Iraq by 21,500 and that he erred by not ordering a military buildup there last year.

"The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people, and it is unacceptable to me," Bush said in a televised speech at the White House. "Where mistakes have been made, the responsibility rests with me."

While most Republicans stood behind Bush, the buildup puts him on a collision course with the new Democratic Congress and pushes the American troop presence in Iraq toward its highest level.

Two of the most prominent Democrats considering a run for the White House, Democratic Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, said Bush was offering the wrong plan and called for pressure to change that approach.

Both senators said Bush should respond to voters' concerns about the unpopular war.

Bush, however, said that "to step back now would force a collapse of the Iraqi government, tear that country apart and result in mass killings on an unimaginable scale."

BUSH ADMITS/ A17

Ex-MILF officer hunted

Brains of Mindanao bombings identified

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY ordered a manhunt for a former operations chief of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) who was allegedly behind the bombings in Mindanao that the Armed Forces chief of staff acknowledged "embarrassed" the administration on the eve of the Asean summit.

In an interview with reporters in Malacañang, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said the military had identified the mastermind behind the attacks as "Usman Basit" based on the distinctive style of the "wiring" of the bombs used in the attacks on Wednesday night in the cities of Cotabato, General Santos and Kidapawan. The blasts left seven people dead and 40 others wounded.

"He used to be with the MILF and we like to think he is now working with terrorist groups, like the JI (Jemaah Islamiyah) and the Abu Sayyaf," said Esperon.

He said the attacks were a "diversionary tactic" after the Abu Sayyaf suffered reverses in the military campaign in Tawi-Tawi province that last week killed seven militants.

Esperon said he briefed Ms Arroyo yesterday morning on the results of the military's investiga-

EX-MILF/ A17

SIX PEOPLE WERE KILLED HERE, 26 HURT: Survivors called it "the most powerful bomb" to hit General Santos City, South Cotabato. It exploded on Wednesday night in front of the central public market, destroying a lotto outlet which, luckily, had been closed three days earlier.

'The show will go on': Asean leaders start arriving

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—SOUTHEAST Asian leaders began arriving here yesterday for a summit to forge a common front against terrorism and poverty, a day after deadly bomb attacks hit three cities in Mindanao.

"The show will go on," Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said hours after blasts hit the Central Mindanao cities of General Santos, South Cotabato and Kidapawan, North Cotabato on Wednesday night.

Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo said "terrorism is always a concern and we must always ensure security." But he added that "we have full confidence in our host."

The 16 leaders taking part in the annual meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the larger East Asia Summit are arriving as scheduled, Ambassador Marciano Paynor told reporters yesterday at the Cebu International Convention Center.

"These bombings are completely isolated incidents that do not relate to the summit meetings," said Paynor, secretary general of the summit's national organizing committee (NOC).

He said the summit venues and VIP routes in Cebu remained safe and secure, without any changes being made to the event calendar.

In his briefing late Wednesday, Romulo said: "I have been told that everything is safe and secure here in the Asean and East Asian summits."

"Whether there is (a) happening in other parts (of the country), the military reported to me that we have an ongoing operation against the JI (Jemaah Islamiyah militants) and other terrorists."

Meeting reporters at the Shangri-La Mactan, the main venue of the top-level meetings, Romulo said the bombings, as explained to him by the Armed Forces, "were part of the retalia-

THE SHOW/ A10

Cebu dateline miffs execs of Mandaue

By Ronnel W. Domingo

"CEBU (PHILIPPINES)."

This was how official news releases of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit being held in the province were to be datelined as of late yesterday afternoon.

A dateline indicates the place from where a journalist files a news story and, usually, the date of filing.

Since Asean summit-related functions and meetings started in December last year, organizers have already issued 21 statements

CEBU/ A9

Now, it's word of Erap vs Mark on Impsa deal

1999: ON AN OFFICIAL visit to Argentina, President Estrada was informed by senior officials of his host country that they remained interested in pursuing the Impsa project. INQUIRER PHOTO FILE

By Cynthia D. Balana

IT'S NOW THE WORD OF FORmer Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez against that of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Jimenez yesterday directly linked Estrada to the $450-million contract to rehabilitate a power plant won by an Argentine firm, which is being linked to the extortion case Jimenez filed against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

The Argentine firm was Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima (Impsa).

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Jimenez said Estrada endorsed the contract to the office of then Secretary of Justice Artemio Tuquero where it was overtaken by the events of Edsa II that led to Estrada's ouster.

But Estrada, through his spokesperson Rufus Rodriguez, denied on Wednesday that he was involved in the bribery issue. The former President noted that it was Jimenez who had brokered the contract and had given $2 million to Perez.

Joining the fray, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada, the wife of the former President, said Jimenez had badgered Estrada up to his last days in Malacañang to approve the contract.

Acting on Jimenez's complaint,

NOW/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Eastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be mostly cloudy with light rains.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/11/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2007

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Bicam forges budget compromise

By TJ Burgonio

THE BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE yesterday broke its deadlock on the P4.7-billion allotment for the Department of Education's food-for-school program, raising hopes that the P1.126-trillion 2007 national budget would be enacted early next month.

Senate panel chair Sen. Franklin Drilon and his House counterpart, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda reached a compromise on the third day of their meeting yesterday morning and decided to halve the allocation of the fund into the Dep-Ed's school feeding program and school building program.

"There's no more hindrance to the submission to the President of a budget before sessions end on Feb. 10," an exuberant Drilon told reporters in a briefing.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. welcomed this.

"It's good that the bicameral conference committee has finally ironed out their differences regarding the national budget for this year. Passing the budget is really among our priorities, this is one less concern for us when session resumes next week," he said in a statement last night.

After the committee failed to break the impasse, Congress adjourned on Dec. 21 for the holidays without enacting the budget. Because of this, the government started operating on the rolled-over P907.56 billion 2005 budget on Jan. 1.

The House had insisted that the P4.7 billion be retained as originally proposed by Malacañang. But the Senate, fearing this could be diverted for political purposes, proposed that this be realigned to fund the hiring of more teachers and the building of more classrooms.

Under the compromise version, P2.613 billion would be allocated for the building of 5,400 classrooms, while the balance of P2 billion would be allotted to a nutrition feeding program to be administered also by the DepEd.

The 5,400 new classrooms to be built are on top of the 12,226 classrooms that would be constructed at a cost of P5.313 billion under the President's budget proposal to Congress. If completed this year, the classroom shortage would be reduced to only 2,961 units, according to Drilon.

On the other hand, the nutrition program, to be dubbed "Malusog na Simula, Yaman ng Bansa Nutrition Program," will entail the distribution of food supplements such as milk, cocopandesal and vegetable-based noodles in public schools.

Under the DepEd's original school feeding program, a kilo of rice was distributed to schoolchildren of poor families daily.

The panel chairs also agreed to allot an additional P873 million for the hiring of new teachers, with specialties in math, physics, chemistry, biology and general science.

"We explained to them that the original concept of the School Feeding Program was really to address the malnutrition problem among our schoolchildren," Drilon, who chairs the Senate finance committee, said when asked what led to the breakthrough.

Drilon agreed to the House panel proposal to retain the P400-million intelligence fund of the Office of the President, another major source of disagreement in earlier talks.

The bicameral committee had yet to thresh out where to source the P10-billion fund needed to rehabilitate portions of Bicol and other regions battered by a series of typhoons last year.

Erap frowns on 'Third Force'

By Norman Bordadora

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada yesterday said he is opposed to the idea of a Third Force composed of anti-Arroyo personalities fielding a senatorial slate separate from that of the United Opposition.

Estrada told the INQUIRER that a second senatorial ticket from the ranks of anti-Arroyo leaders will hurt the unity of the opposition as well as its expectedly strong chances in the midterm polls.

"I am not in favor of a Third Force. It will hurt the unity of the opposition," Estrada said from his estate-detention in Tanay, Rizal.

"Also, it can also be used by the administration against us. They can even be bankrolled by the administration especially since elections cost money," he added.

Estrada said it is his preference that opposition leaders who fail to be chosen in the UNO's 12-person senatorial slate remain with the mainstream group of anti-Arroyo forces and support the ticket four-square.

"We are coming up with a 12-0 movement against the administration. It will be best if they stay with the opposition and not be part of a Third Force," Estrada said.

Estrada said the UNO might not beat its Jan. 15 deadline to come up with the final 12 members of its senatorial lineup.

"It appears that we won't be able to announce it (as scheduled on Jan. 15). There are too many qualified personalities who want to run with the opposition," Estrada said.

Estrada spokesperson Rufus Rodriguez said the opposition has already trimmed down its list of senatorial hopefuls from 40 to just 18 names.

"These are individuals with proven qualifications and winnability," Rodriguez said.

He, however, declined to name names pending the completion of the final lineup.

Rodriguez said the personalities come from parties such as the Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel's Partido Demokratikong Pilipino-Laban, Senate President Manuel Villar's Nacionalista Party, Sen. Franklin Drilon's faction of the Liberal Party and the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

DEFENSOR

ESTRADA

Free Erap stance has GMA blessing–Defensor

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

AMID STIFF OPPOSITION FROM CABINET officials and key administration allies, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor claims that President Macapagal-Arroyo is backing his proposal for the temporary release of jailed President Joseph Estrada.

"The President is all for giving Estrada temporary liberty, but she has not specified how to implement this," said Defensor in an interview with reporters. "The President has always been supportive of the effort to reconcile as she appointed me as the point man under her ten point agenda."

"She has no problem with Estrada's temporary release. There is no personal animosity between them," Defensor said.

Defensor is proposing to free Estrada through recognizance or under the guarantee of religious leaders. Defensor, who had even offered himself as guarantor of Estrada in the recognizance, stressed that the recognizance was solely the "judgment call" of the Sandiganbayan.

But Presidential Legal Adviser Sergio Apostol said recognizance was not a legal option in Estrada's case.

"Recognizance can only be applied in small cases that are bailable. There is no bail for plunder, so how can there be recognizance? That is in the law, temporary liberty only applies to minor cases, not to crimes with capital punishment," Apostol said in an interview with reporters.

Apostol added that the government was better off letting the Estrada case take its course. "Let's just wait for the court to decide on the matter," Apostol said.

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson was incensed by Defensor's decision to revive the oft-rejected Estrada recognizance proposal a few months before the May elections.

"*Hindi siya pwedeng mamangka sa dalawang ilog, dapat mamili siya sa tama o mali*, (He can't straddle the fence. He has to choose between right and wrong)," said Singson in a phone interview.

Although he could not fault Defensor for wanting to court the pro-Estrada masses to bolster his senatorial bid, Singson said Defensor should not sacrifice his principles just for the sake of getting votes.

Singson said: "Freeing Estrada, even temporarily, is just like absolving him of the plunder case the government is charging him with. What message is this government sending to the public when it does not pursue justice to the end?"

He warned that freeing Estrada could lead to the downfall of the Arroyo administration. "If they let Estrada go, this means that the administration is admitting that it made a mistake in jailing him for plunder. This means that this administration has been a farce since 2001," said Singson whose testimony against Estrada spurred the Senate impeachment trial which led to Edsa 2 that ushered President Arroyo to the presidency.

FPJ bloc pressing Susan to run

By TJ Burgonio

SUPPORTERS OF THE LATE MOVIE ICON and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. are pulling out all the stops to persuade his widow, Susan Roces, to lead the opposition senatorial slate in the May 14 elections that is seen by many as a referendum on the Arroyo administration's legitimacy.

Roces, a veteran movie actress, however, isn't biting.

"She has begged off from several overtures, but I must tell you that those who want her to consider running have not given up," said former Senate President Ernesto Maceda, who is part of the United Opposition's (UNO) screening committee for senatorial candidates, at a recent breakfast forum.

"They're still hoping that with some discernment, some more prayers, she might be persuaded to change her mind within the next few weeks," Maceda said.

Poe's then campaign managers, including actor Rez Cortez, have stepped up their efforts to coax Roces to join the senatorial race, apparently with Poe's loss in the 2004 presidential elections still fresh in their minds.

Poe lost to President Macapagal-Arroyo by over one million votes in the bitterly contested elections three years ago that was marred by allegations of fraud on the latter's part. Poe died after suffering a massive stroke in December that year.

"There are so many groups [under] our umbrella... who are making last-ditch efforts to change Susan Roces' mind and persuade her to run," Maceda said.

Roces had mostly kept a low profile since her husband's death. But in rare interviews and public appearances, she had been highly critical of the present administration. She, however, had consistently said she was averse to joining politics.

She has until Feb. 12, however, the deadline for the filing of candidacies for the Senate, to decide whether or not to run.

"Definitely, she will be a shoo-in [in the UNO slate]," Maceda said after the forum. "You have to assume that those who voted for FPJ will also vote for Susan."

UNO, under ousted President Joseph Estrada, has been gearing up for a tough contest against the administration to fill up the 12 senatorial slots.

For the past several months, Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino has been locked in talks with Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay's PDP-Laban as well as Senate President Manuel Villar Jr.'s Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party wing of Sen. Franklin Drilon, among others, on a possible alliance against President Arroyo's Lakas-CMD coalition.

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38 city, provincial cop chiefs revamped

By Alcuin Papa

A MAJOR REVAMP IN THE Philippine National Police (PNP) is set to be implemented today on the provincial level.

A total of 33 provincial commanders and five city chiefs of police, with ranks ranging from senior superintendent to superintendent, all over the country will be replaced today.

The revamp is embodied in orders signed by PNP Chief Director General Oscar Calderon, PNP Deputy Chief for Administration Deputy Director General Avelino Razon and PNP Directorate for Personnel Director Nicolas Pasinos. Razon is also chair of the PNP's Senior Officers Promotion and Placement Board (SOPPB).

Sr. Supt. Jonathan Ablang is set to be chief of police in Santiago City, Isabela; Sr. Supt. Patrocino Comendador in Cebu City; Sr. Supt. Morente in Davao City; Sr. Supt. Vicente Bautista in General Santos City; and Sr. Supt. Admirante Josue in Butuan City.

Bautista will have his hands full as he leads the investigation of the bomb blast that rocked General Santos City the other night.

Comendador's appointment comes as Cebu City hosts the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) Summit.

A total 26 officers were replaced due to the completion of their two-year tour of duty.

The commanders of the Laguna, Bohol, Misamis Oriental and Kalinga provinces were replaced upon the "request" of local officials in their areas. Two officers are set to retire.

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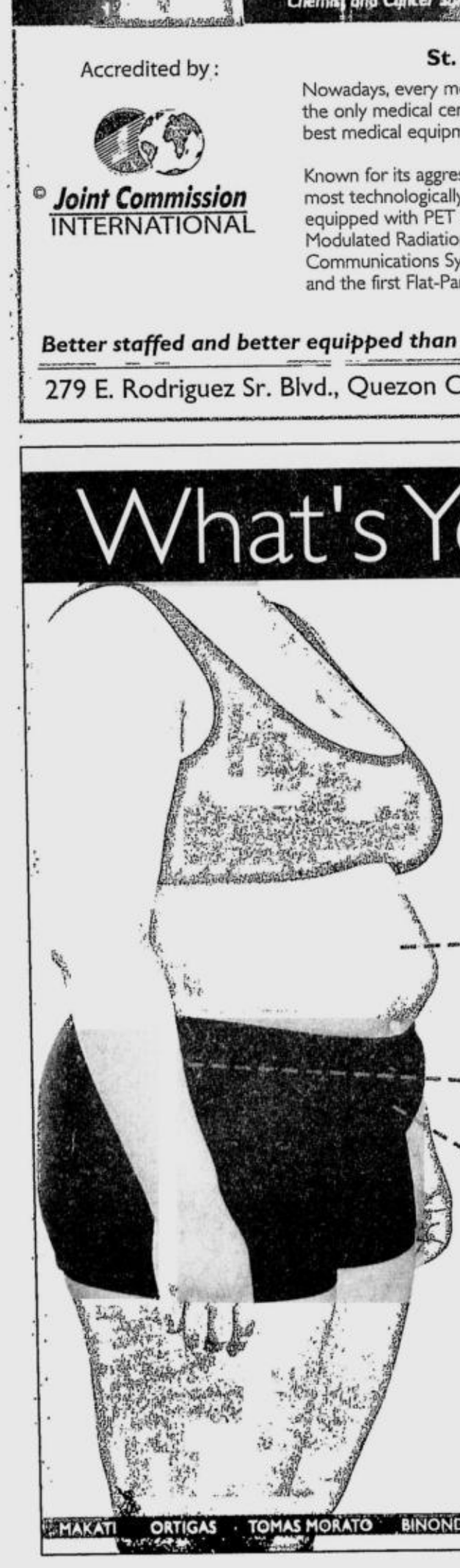

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There's no need to amend power law, says coauthor

THERE IS NO NEED TO AMEND THE ELECTRIC Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) in order to attract more foreign investments into the country, one of the authors of the law said yesterday.

On the contrary, Epira's implementation will further boost foreign investments as the industry opens up to competition, said Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella, vice chair of the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC) and a co-author of the Epira.

"The vision of the Epira is really to free the government of having to continue funding power projects and giving guarantees to private power companies. Let it be remembered that much of the problems we are encountering now was due to government's over-contracting of power and guaranteeing its profits through these Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) contracts," Fuentebella said in a press statement.

He explained that turning back the clock by amending the law, as some sectors have proposed, would not help achieve the goal of giving competitively-priced and stable power to the Filipino consumers.

"As in any policy shift, there will always be teething pains. We just have to patiently implement the Epira instead of being impatient and asking for amendments just when we are starting to make progress," he said.

He added that today, private utilities and generation companies are taking the risks for their business decisions. If they over-contract or overbuild, these companies will definitely suffer.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, January 12, 2007
1st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 4:1-5, 11
Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

Jesus returned to Capernaum. As the news spread that he was at home, so many people gathered that there was no longer room even outside the door. While Jesus was preaching the Word to them, some people brought a paralyzed man to him.

The four men who carried him couldn't get near Jesus because of the crowd, so they opened the roof above the room where Jesus was and, through the hole, lowered the man on his mat. When Jesus saw the faith of these people, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

Now, some teachers of the Law who were sitting there wondered within themselves, "How can he speak like this insulting God? Who can forgive sins except God?"

At once Jesus knew through his spirit what they were thinking and asked, "Why do you wonder? Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man: 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say: 'Rise, take up your mat and walk?' But now you shall know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

And he said to the paralytic, "Stand up, take up your mat and go home." The man rose and, in the sight of all those people, he took up his mat and went out. All of them were astonished and praised God saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Commentary

We are invited into the rest of God, and yet by our baptisms we dwell in that presence of God, in the Trinity. And this word and belief is something we share with others. But has the word that we have heard benefited us? Have we held onto this belief? Some people bring a paralyzed man to Jesus, going up on the roof, dislodging tiles, and lowering him down in front of Jesus. Jesus is moved by the man's friends and their belief, and he forgives him. This bothers some others who are more concerned with correct acknowledgement of who forgives than the wonder of wholeness that accompanies Jesus' words. He knows them, and us. And he also asks us, "What's harder? To forgive another or to heal?" Are we like the man in need of forgiveness, one of his good friends or one of those who dismisses Jesus' words?

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENTS	TIME
JANUARY 2007 20 & 21	PHILIPPINES CANINE CLUB INC. "ALL BREEDS DOG SHOW"	8:00am - 5:00pm
27	VETERINARY PRACTIONERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINE "INTER-SCHOOL VETERINARY QUIZ"	8:00am - 5:00pm
28	PHILIPPINE TOY DOG CLUB "ALL BREEDS DOG SHOW"	8:00am - 5:00pm
FEBRUARY 2007 03	BEAGLE FANCIERS CLUB INC. "ALL BREEDS DOG SHOW"	8:00am - 5:00pm
12 & 18	PHILIPPINE ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL Back to Back PHILIPPINE CULINARY ARTS & FOOD FESTIVAL	
21 & 24	PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECT	8:00am - 5:00pm
25	PHILIPPINE TOY DOG CLUB/WORKING HERDING ASS. INC. "SPECIALTY DOG SHOW"	8:00am - 5:00pm
APRIL 2007 April 30 to May 06	PHILIPPINE AROWANA & LOU HAN SOCIETY	8:00am - 5:00pm
JUNE 2007 02 & 03	CHIHUAHUA FEDERATION OF THE PHILIPPINE INC. "ALL BREEDS DOG SHOW"	8:00am - 5:00pm
JULY 2007 28	BEAGLE FANCIERS CLUB INC. "ALL BREEDS DOG SHOW"	8:00am - 5:00pm

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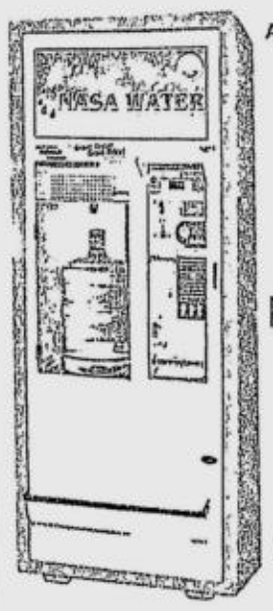

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Customs seizes container

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAS seized a container with undeclared items, including six motorcycles, that was earlier released from its premises without undergoing the mandatory physical examination.

The container was seized at Barangay Mozon in San Jose del Monte Bulacan after its illegal release from the Port of Manila on Dec. 8.

The container was consigned to Dan Bill Forwarders.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the container's removal from the BoC premises without being inspected was a violation of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines.

Leila B. Salaverria

HOLIDAY BREAK OVER

BIR resumes taxpayers' audit

By Cynthia D. Balana and Michelle V. Remo

WITH THE CHRISTMAS SEASON OVER, THE Bureau of Internal Revenue yesterday resumed its tax audit and other field operations in its quest to attain its much higher collection goal of P734 billion this year.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said the suspension of all audit and other field operations between Dec. 18, 2006, and Jan. 5, 2007, had lapsed and tax examinations of individuals and corporations will resume.

Buñag ordered the audit suspension in the spirit of Christmas and to enable the traders to concentrate on their businesses during the holiday season.

The audit will cover the examination and verification of taxpayers' liabilities, books of accounts, records and other transactions.

Intensify investigation

In a meeting with BIR officials and personnel of its National Investigation Division (NID), formerly the Tax Fraud Division, Buñag urged them to intensify their investigation of taxpayers and disclosed his plan to reactivate the Policy Cases Division (PCD) to probe certain sectors suspected of not paying their taxes. The NID is headed by Arnel SD. Guballa.

Among the groups being investigated this year are manpower services and Philippine Economic Zone Authority-registered business establishments which enjoy income tax holidays.

BIR Deputy Commissioner for Legal and Enforcement Group Gregorio Cabantac said the NID, composed of an elite group of BIR investigators, was expected to come up with well-substantiated reports involving tax fraud and evasion.

Reward

"The Millennium Challenge Project of the Department of Finance (DOF) gave them a minimum target of two RATE (Run After Tax Evaders) cases per month," Buñag said, adding that the NID RATE target did not include RATE cases filed by Revenue Regional Offices.

The BIR likewise reiterated it was offering a P1-million reward to persons who could provide the agency information on tax evaders, both individual and corporate.

Companies located in PEZAs are exempt from paying the 35-percent corporate income tax and other levies. These firms are only required to pay a 5-percent tax on their gross income.

The Department of Finance, the BIR's head agency, however, earlier said the government could be losing huge revenues every year due to the under-declaration of their gross income by PEZA-registered firms.

The DOF official said the BIR was also urged to audit firms registered with the Board of Investments (BOI) amid reports some of these were claiming income tax holidays.

The source said the government lost an average of P12.7-billion in potential revenues every year from 2000 to 2004 due to false tax holiday claims made by unscrupulous companies, whose income tax exemptions had lapsed.

A DOF study showed that in 2004 alone, the amount of false claims of income tax exemptions reached P11.8 billion.

Fund against corruption

The national government, through the DOF, received a $21-million grant from the US government's Millennium Challenge Corp. last year to help fund its programs against corruption, tax evasion and smuggling.

The amount was used particularly to fund the operations of the Office of the Ombudsman, and to support the Run After the Smugglers (RATS) program of the Bureau of Customs, the BIR's RATE, and the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) of the Department of Finance.

RIPS is the DOF unit tasked with conducting lifestyle checks of BIR and BOC officials suspected of corruption.

Cavite gov accepts fate, withdraws SC petition

By Armand N. Nocum

CAVITE GOV. ERINEO MALIKSI YESTERDAY withdrew a petition he filed before the Supreme Court questioning his suspension in connection with an alleged "ghost purchase of rice" two years ago.

Maliksi offered no explanation for pulling out his petition but his lawyer, Antonio Bautisto, said that the governor wanted to have "peace."

The lawyer had pulled out the case pending before the high court which sought the nullification of the April 3, 2006 decision of the Court of Appeals upholding the governor's 6-month preventive suspension for his alleged involvement in the anomalous P7.5-million rice deal in 2004.

Commenting on the move, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he believed Maliksi honestly wanted an untroubled existence that would result from the withdrawal of the petition, and that the governor had accepted his suspension. He described Maliksi as a "gentleman-politician."

"We welcome these developments and if that is the attitude of a public official, then there will be basic understanding. It is better reaction than those of others who resort to sour-graping," Gonzalez said.

The appellate court earlier granted the motion for reconsideration filed by the Office of the Ombudsman and Vice Gov. Juanito Victor Remulla, saying "there is no more obstacle" for the antigraft body to implement Maliksi's suspension.

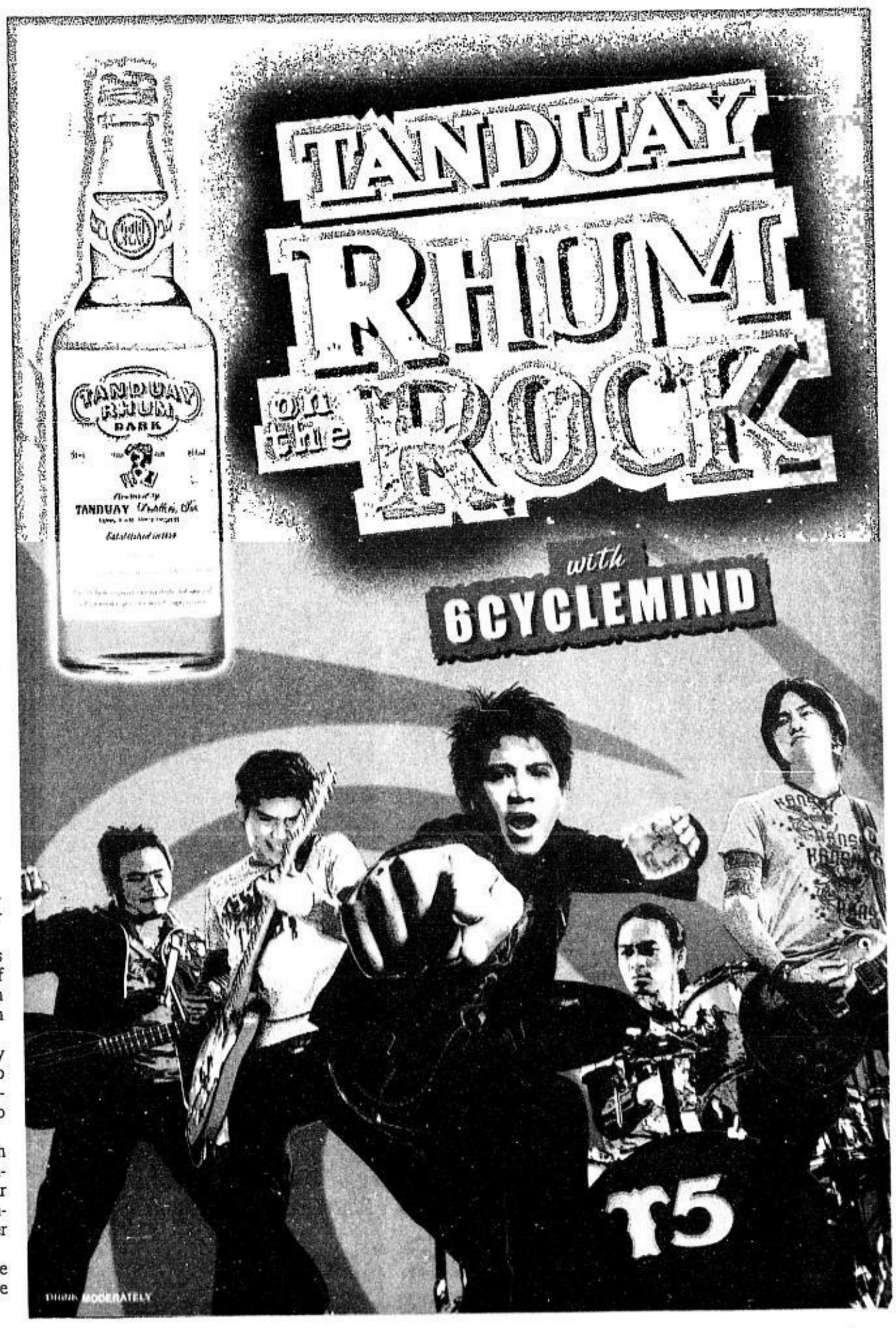
The appeals court said that Maliksi should present all his evidence to counter the charges against him before the antigraft body, which had jurisdiction over the case.

The court dismissed Maliksi's petition assailing the validity of the suspension order issued against him by the Ombudsman last August 15, 2005.

Maliksi named Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Victor Fernandez, Ombudsman Director Joaquin Salazar, Vice Gov. Juanito Victor Remulla and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes as respondents in his petition.

Maliksi alleged that he had been denied due process by the antigraft body and thus the Ombudsman committed grave abuse of discretion when it issued the suspension order.

Maliksi, who claimed that his suspension was politically motivated, said the Ombudsman did not give him the opportunity to show cause why he should not be suspended nor sent a subpoena with a copy of the complaint-affidavit before he was ordered suspended.



10 immigration men probed for Viet terrorist's escape

By Armand N. Nocum

AS MAY AS 10 IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS FACE possible suspension for the questionable release of suspected Vietnamese-American terrorist Vo Van Duc, alias Vinh Nguyen, who is believed to have returned to the country to sow terror during the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Cebu this week.

A Department of Justice (DOJ) panel investigating the illegal deportation of aliens, among them Duc, who are facing criminal charges has recommended the suspension of about five to 10 middle-level officials of the Bureau of Immigration for "mismanagement."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez refused to confirm whether those recommended for suspension included Commissioners Jose Cabochan, Roy Almoro and Teodoro Delarmente, who signed Duc's release order.

The United States has launched a manhunt for Duc.

"I am still studying what would be their liability. What is wrong in the BI is that there is poor management," he said.

Gonzalez met with the three commissioners and BI lawyer Alex Fernandez, brother and chief of staff of Immigration chief Alipio Fernandez on Wednesday night "to confront them with certain facts."

The DOJ panel headed by Undersecretary Ernesto Pineda has submitted its findings to Gonzalez following its two-month long preliminary investigation based on an expose of Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers.

An official privy to Gonzalez's meeting with the four commissioners said the panel recommended the immediate suspension of the four officials, but two of the four officials urged Gonzalez not to immediately implement the order because of the upcoming elections.

"They said it would look bad if they will have this case hanging on their heads while they are campaigning," the source said.

Labor exec favors 'legit' RP entertainers in Japan

By Jerome Aning

AFTER A DROP IN THE DEPLOYment of Filipino overseas performing artists to Japan, the Department of Labor is pushing for "legitimate entertainers" who are more popular and would thus earn more money.

Labor attaché Reydeluz Conferido said more dance troupes, rock bands, instrument players and cultural performers would be needed in Japan in the coming years.

"The Japanese are in need entertainment because they're among the saddest people in the world, based on a recent survey conducted by the New Economic Foundation based in London," he told reporters.

Conferido admitted that from a high of 82,000 in 2004, the number of OPAs deployed to Japan shrunk to only about 5,000 last year. Only about 40,000 entertainers remain in Japan, mostly permanent residents and wives of Japanese residents.

Beginning March 2004, the Japanese government prohibited entertainers from working in Japan unless they are trained for two years and have worked in an entertainment venue outside Japan for at least two years.

Conferido said negotiations are ongoing between the Philippines and Japan so that not only training and experience would be counted but also the world-class talent of the Filipino artist.

"We are proposing to Japanese authorities that if they have questions about the capabilities of our entertainers then the two-years training and experience should not be an obstacle.

"Let us make a process that is very transparent; if they are legitimate entertainers, they can demonstrate it to the Japanese themselves by performing," he said.

One problem the Japanese entertainment industry in Japan would be facing is that, because of the many workers from the "baby boomer" generation expected to retire, they would stop spending lavishly and concentrate on health care, Conferido said.

"However, those who are retired and have money really want entertainment that is really good and legitimate," he said, recounting how he once brought the famous Bayanihan dancers whom the elderly Japanese enjoyed.

He also said that bands like the Side A and chorus groups such as the Madrigal Singers were also very much appreciated by the Japanese.

"Promoters should be doing this, they should go for the high end, go for the legitimate," he added. "They need to produce something exciting, something that caters the real need of the Japanese."

BONI HOUSING ROW

Appeals court upholds Navy vs retired officers

By Dona Pazzibugan

NAVY AUTHORITIES MOVED closer to evicting the last of "overstaying" retired senior officers from military quarters meant for active-duty officers at the Bonifacio Naval Station in Fort Bonifacio.

In a decision penned by Associate Justice Renato Dacudao dated Dec. 28, 2006, the Court of Appeals' 8th Division upheld the Navy's claim to the 47.5-hectare BNS housing area, which a group of retired Navy and Marine officers had claimed for their own since 1991.

The court reversed the Aug. 20, 2004 decision of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 67 that upheld the claim of the Navy Officers Village Association Inc. (Novai) to the property.

In its 47-page decision, the appeals court declared Novai's land title TCT No. 15387 as "null and void" and ordered Novai to surrender their land title to the Pasig City Register of Deeds for cancellation.

The CA also ordered the Novai members who continue to occupy their BNS quarters to vacate and remove whatever improvements they have made in the units.

Court injunction

A Navy spokesperson said the Navy, through the Office of the Solicitor General, will ask the Makati RTC Branch 141 to lift the injunction that 17 Novai members had secured to prevent their eviction last May.

On May 20, 2006, the Navy then under Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga evicted 56 retired Navy and Marine senior officers who were not covered by the court injunction.

More than 100 other retired officers and enlisted personnel were afterwards evicted from other military quarters in the BNS.

"The decision of the CA upheld the Navy's right over the land and housing facilities inside Fort Bonifacio. The Navy leadership calls on the 17 overstaying occupants at the Navy village to vacate their quarters voluntarily to give way to active personnel," said Navy spokesperson Commodore Giovanni Carlo Bacordo.

Novai officers led by retired Commodores Eduardo Domingo and Rodolfo Simon laid claim to the housing units and the entire lot by invoking past presidential proclamations, including former President Corazon Aquino's Proclamation 2478 dated Sept. 25, 1991.

Novai secured a title to the property based on a deed of sale allegedly executed on Nov. 15, 1991. But the government maintained the land title was spurious.

In its decision, the appellate said Novai failed to prove the existence of Proclamation 2478 which supposedly authorized the "transfer and titling" of the property to the officers occupying the BNS quarters at the time.

"The existence of Presidential Proclamation No. 2487 could easily be proved and established by its publication in the Official Gazette. But the (Novai) could not, as it did not, submit or present any copy or issue of the Official Gazette mentioning or referring to this Presidential Proclamation No. 2487," the CA said.

Signature forged

The court also ruled that the signature of Pasig City Land Management Bureau Director Abelardo Palad Jr., who supposedly executed the deed of sale, was forged based on the analysis of a handwriting expert from the National Bureau of Investigation.

The court also noted how during a court hearing, when he was shown the deed of sale, Palad could only comment that the signature on it had a "resemblance" to his own. "Resemblance is nowhere nearly the equivalent of authenticity or genuineness," the CA said.

"In addition, the dubiousness of the questioned deed of sale is reinforced by the nearly conclusive evidence that (Novai) did not go through the normal or regular process in the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) nor in the LMB, in the filing of an application, in the conduct of a survey, and in the undertaking of an investigation, among others," the CA went on.

Mayuga, who was replaced as Navy chief by Vice Adm. Rogelio Calunsag upon his retirement last Dec. 9, said officers should never again be allowed to stay on in their assigned quarters after their retirement.

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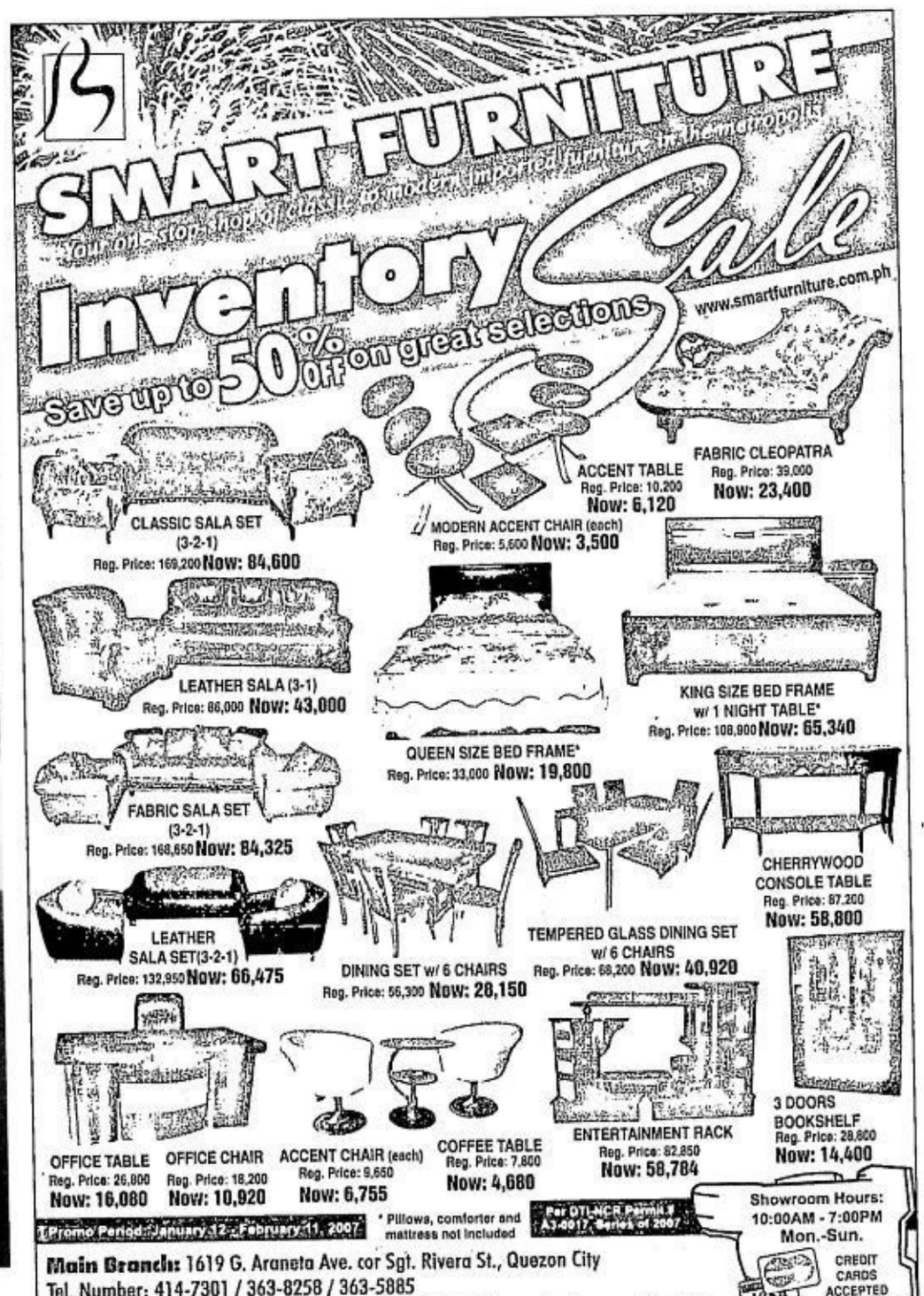


TEST RUN OUTPUT

Lafayette to send 1st copper shipment to China

AUSTRALIA'S LAFAYETTE MINING LTD. hopes to ship by the end of the week 870 tons of copper concentrates to China, its first output of the metal from its Rapu-Rapu project in the Philippines, a spokesperson said yesterday.

Bayani Agabin, spokesperson of Lafayette, said the copper was an "incidental production" from the Rapu-Rapu project during the test run of the base metals plant last year before it was forced to shut in early December due to damage caused by a typhoon.

"There was an incidental production of 870 tons of copper concentrates, which we hope to ship by the end of the week," Agabin told Reuters by phone.

The copper has been sold to South Korean trading firm LG International Corp., Agabin said. He declined to give price details.

"The copper is going to China," Agabin added.

The company made the statement after Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said he had approved the issuance of a permit to ship the copper output of Rapu-Rapu mine during its test run last year.

"It's just lying there so they can now dispose of whatever they produced," Reyes told reporters.

Temporary closure

The government allowed Lafayette to test its base metals facility starting July 10 till Dec. 8 last year, after two cyanide spills in October 2005 that led to a temporary closure.

"We are targetting to reopen in early February," Agabin said. He said Typhoon "Reming" toppled electrical poles and damaged the roofs and walls of housing facilities for the staff at the mine in November.

"With respect to the base metals plant, there is no critical damage," Agabin said.

The Rapu-Rapu project was the first foreign-owned mine to open after the Supreme Court upheld in December 2004 the legality of a law granting 100 percent foreign ownership on mining projects from the previous 40 percent.

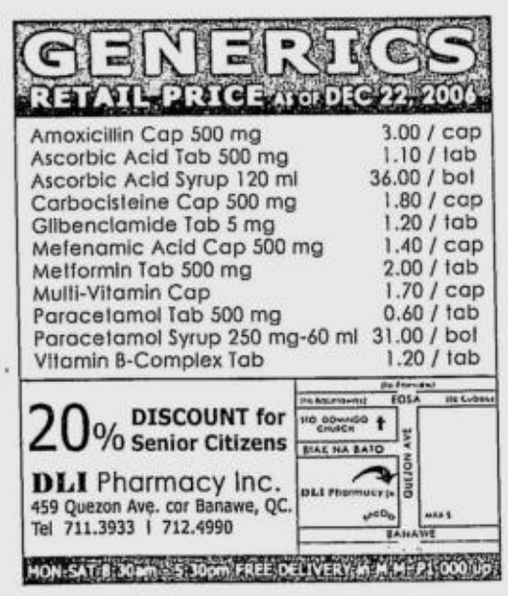
Revenues

But the spills in Rapu-Rapu raised the ire of powerful Catholic bishops and environment groups.

Before the suspension, the mine was forecast to generate revenues of $350 million a year from production of 10,000 tons of copper in concentrate, 14,000 tons of zinc, 50,000 ounces of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver.

In June, Lafayette paid a fine of P10.4 million imposed by the government after the spills.

South Korea's LG International Corp. and the state-run Korea Resources Corp. (Kores) together hold 26 percent of Lafayette Philippines Inc. while Australia's Lafayette owns the rest. *Reuters*



Erap: How could GMA not have known about $450-M deal?

By Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo must have known what Justice Secretary Hernando Perez was up to before he issued a legal opinion favoring the over $450-million power deal with a government guarantee to Argentine firm Industrias Metallurgicas Perscarmona Sociedad Anonimo (Impsa).

Estrada made the observation a day after he said in a statement that the Argentine firm had tried to bribe him with $14 million through his then Presidential Adviser on Latin American affairs, Mark Jimenez, so that he would give the go-signal to the contract with a sovereign guarantee clause.

"When I was President, I was consulted by the Cabinet secretaries, (then Trade Secretary) Jose Pardo and the justice secretary. I knew about the contract and the sovereign guarantee," the former President told the INQUIRER from his estate in Tanay where he is under house arrest.

"How can a mere justice secretary give the go-ahead to a contract with a sovereign guarantee without the knowledge of the President?" Estrada said.

Estrada made the statement a day after Jimenez told a group of reporters that Perez was acting on his own when he extorted $2 million from him in 2001.

All this talk that Ms Arroyo benefited from the $2-million extortion case filed against Perez should end with Jimenez himself clearing her of any involvement, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

"The person involved himself cleared the President ... What else is there to talk about," Ermita said in a phone interview.

He said those who continued to fuel talk that the Chief Executive had a hand in the extortion case were those who want "to exploit it for political ends."

Estrada reiterated his statement that the $2 million was part of the $14 million first offered to him by Impsa through Jimenez.

Jimenez has denied that there was a $14-million payoff to Arroyo administration officials, particularly Perez, saying the tale was just concocted by Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a long-time lieutenant of Estrada's.

"I'm not saying that she benefited from the payoff. That's speculative. I'm just saying what I know. That there was no way that she couldn't know of Perez's moves favoring the government approval of the Impsa deal," Estrada said.

Estrada recalled that it was on a Saturday, on Jan. 20, 2001, that he left Malacañang.

He said Perez signed the opinion finding the Impsa deal legal and above-board days later.

"Had I accepted the bribe, they will no longer be talking of any $14 million today," Estrada said.

The offer, he said, was made during the early days of his administration.

To honor FVR commitment

"I told them that I will honor the commitment of my predecessor (President Fidel Ramos). But when I learned that the deal was accompanied by the need for a sovereign guarantee, I balked at giving it my approval," Estrada said.

"Had I given the sovereign guarantee and they failed to pay their loans, the Filipino taxpayer would have ended up paying their obligations," he added.

A sovereign guarantee automatically requires the national government to assume the liabilities of a private Philippine company should it be unable to pay its debts.

Estrada spokesperson Rufus Rodriguez said Estrada had the sole distinction of being the only Philippine president to refuse to grant sovereign guarantees on power plant projects.

He also called on Jimenez to reveal where the balance of $12 million from the total $14-million bribe went.

"The entire truth must finally be told. In the interest of justice and clearing up the name of President Estrada, who has been unfairly dragged into this extortion case, Jimenez should reveal all he knows about this," Rodriguez said.

AFFIDAVIT

I, KIMIKO SAGAMI, of legal age, widow and now residing at, 3 - 7 - 10 NAKAICHYO TAKASAKI CITY GUNMA JAPAN, after having been sworn in accordance with law, depose and say that:

1. I am the only surviving Heir of Yoshitaka Sagami who died in the City of Makati, Metropolitan Manila, Philippines, on May 25, 2005 hereto attached as ANNEX "A" and made an integral part of this Affidavit

2. Said deceased left the following condominium units hereto attached as ANNEX "B" inclusive and more particularly described as follows:

CCT	UNIT OFFICE	FLR AREA	# of P.S.	FLOOR LOCATION	PARKING FLR AREA	EQUIV. GROSS FLR AREA	% SHARE
PT-17106	706	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17103	701	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17104	702	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17105	705	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17144	703	140.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7566
PT-17145	704	140.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7566
39425	1406	149.70	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7104
39411	102	97.44	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.4624
39408	1409	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39409	1401	149.70	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7104
39426	1411	65.10	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.3089
39424	1404	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39412	1410	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39410	1403	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39427	1405	65.10	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.3089
39430	1408	65.10	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.3089

3. Said deceased left one hundred fifty seven million Philippine pesos, more or less, debts.

4. Pursuant to Rule 74, Section 1 of the Rule of Court of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, I hereby adjudicate unto myself the above described condominium units by means of this Affidavit and hereby files same with the appropriate Register of Deeds of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines with the request that said adjudication shall be made effective without judicial proceedings as prescribed by the above mentioned Rules of Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand this August 29, 2006 in the Tokyo, Japan.

(Signed)
KIMIKO SAGAMI

This is to certify that this document was subscribed before me by the above-named person (s) on this day August 29, 2006

(Signed)
Mikazu Ikeda
Notary

Now, it's word of Erap ...

From page A1

the Ombudsman issued a ruling on Monday recommending the filing of graft and extortion charges against Perez, his wife Rosario, brother-in-law Ramon Arceo and business associate Ernest Escaler in the Sandiganbayan.

Motion for reconsideration

Yesterday, Perez filed a motion for reconsideration before the Ombudsman in connection with the extortion charges that may be filed against him before the Sandiganbayan next week.

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni confirmed that the antigraft agency has already received Perez's motion for reconsideration in connection with his alleged receipt of $2 million from Jimenez.

Perez's motion questioned the Ombudsman's finding of probable cause against him since a business associate, Ernest Escaler, had already claimed in a sworn affidavit that he was the source of the million-dollar fund in Perez's bank account in Hong Kong.

Jimenez filed the complaint for extortion against the then justice secretary in 2001.

Paper trail

Using pieces of "champoy" (Chinese preserved fruit) to represent the offices involved, Jimenez explained the paper trail that led to the endorsement of the Impsa contract. He also explained the process for a government contract with a sovereign guarantee.

Being an energy contract, he said, the process started with National Power Corp., then was brought to the Department of Energy, then to the Office of the President.

The President then endorsed it to his executive secretary who, in turn, endorsed it to the Board of Investments and to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) for the approval of the technical side of the contract.

From Neda, the contract went to the secretary of finance, who approved the guarantee with the central bank. The Department of Justice was last in giving its opinion on its legality.

"How can it reach the Department of Justice if it did not come from the President? Doesn't a contract need to secure a lot of signatures?" Jimenez said.

Jimenez said that another proof of Estrada's endorsement of the contract was the latter's state visit to Argentina in 1999 and trip to Mendoza, the province where the Impsa headquarters and the home of the firm's owner are located.

He said Estrada talked to the owner who invited the former President to his house.

"That is conflict of interest and obstruction of justice. Why would you go to the home of someone seeking a contract? It's a conflict of interest. Why go to Mendoza? The papers in the office of the secretary of justice were for approval. The visit [to Mendoza] was a recommendation to approve the contract," he said.

Jimenez said the contract would have pushed through had Estrada not been removed through people power.

The contract was, nevertheless, approved by Perez, who became President Macapagal-Arroyo's first justice secretary.

No P14-M bribe

Jimenez had claimed that he was forced to cough up $2 million after Perez threatened him at his home in Forbes Park in Makati shortly after Estrada was ousted.

The threat came after Jimenez refused to execute an affidavit against cronies of Estrada, to be used against them if they did not support Ms Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

Jimenez denied Estrada's claim that he first offered the supposed $14-million Impsa bribe to him.

Estrada insisted that the bribe was received by the Arroyo administration and that the $2 million, which Jimenez wired to Perez, was part of it.

"If I had a bribe for him, why did he talk to the owner of Impsa in Argentina? ... There was really no bribe unless he was the one bribed. But all this talk about Impsa came from Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Estrada," Jimenez said.

Greed

Asked why Estrada and Lacson had the same version of the amount, Jimenez said the two needed each other, especially during elections.

"Greed. It's all greed and power. Lacson needs Estrada's endorsement. Of course, Erap also needs Ping, who might win. But not now [because] Mark Jimenez is here," he said.

Jimenez denied that he had brokered the Impsa deal as Estrada's presidential adviser on Latin American affairs.

The former congressman said that in the first place, he never accepted the position and that he did not take his oath.

Jimenez said he was surprised that Estrada did not declare the Impsa contract a bad deal when the latter believed it was a bad contract.

"He endorsed [the deal] through recommendation. It was approved because there was a bribe. It meant he agreed to the deal. Right? Why did the documents get approved? Who was bribed? *Eh di siya* (It was him)," Jimenez said.

Senate probe

In the Senate, Sen. Panfilo Lacson is reviving a resolution seeking an inquiry into the alleged $14-million payoff to administration officials in exchange for the approval of the Impsa contract.

Lacson said he was calling an inquiry anew to look into the circumstances, personalities and the "real amount of bribe money involved in the payoff" following Jimenez's "attempt to twist the facts" in the press.

He said Jimenez himself should be summoned to the inquiry to shed light on the alleged payoff.

Sen. Franklin Drilon backed Lacson's move to investigate the alleged payoff.

"I'd encourage Senator Lacson to do this so a fresh inquiry could be made of this," he told reporters, even as he scoffed at Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's claim that he was behind Lacson's move. "Why, is Lacson my robot?"

With a report from TJ Burgonio

TIMELINE

Impsa deal

- **1993**—Argentine firm Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonimas (Impsa) presents to the National Power Corp. an unsolicited 25-year joint venture proposal to rehabilitate and expand the existing Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric power plant complex in Laguna.

  Napocor rejects the proposal because Impsa had given a ridiculously high price of P2.41/kwh when Napocor could do the project for P1.06/kwh.
- **1995**—Then Napocor president Guido Delgado accepts a revised proposal from Impsa.
- **Nov. 27, 1996**—An Australian-led consortium, which includes the First Private Power Corp. (FPPC) Consortium of the Lopez-Gokongwei tandem submits a competing bid after Napocor's invitation for any challenge to the Impsa proposal. Napocor releases its findings that the firm has a more advantageous proposal compared with that of Impsa.
- **December 1997**—Impsa matches the FPPC proposal. Since under the "unsolicited proposal" mechanism of the build-operate-transfer law, the original proponent is entitled to match the more advantageous proposal, Impsa is entitled to the contract. This prompts FPPC to file a graft case against Napocor and Impsa before the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

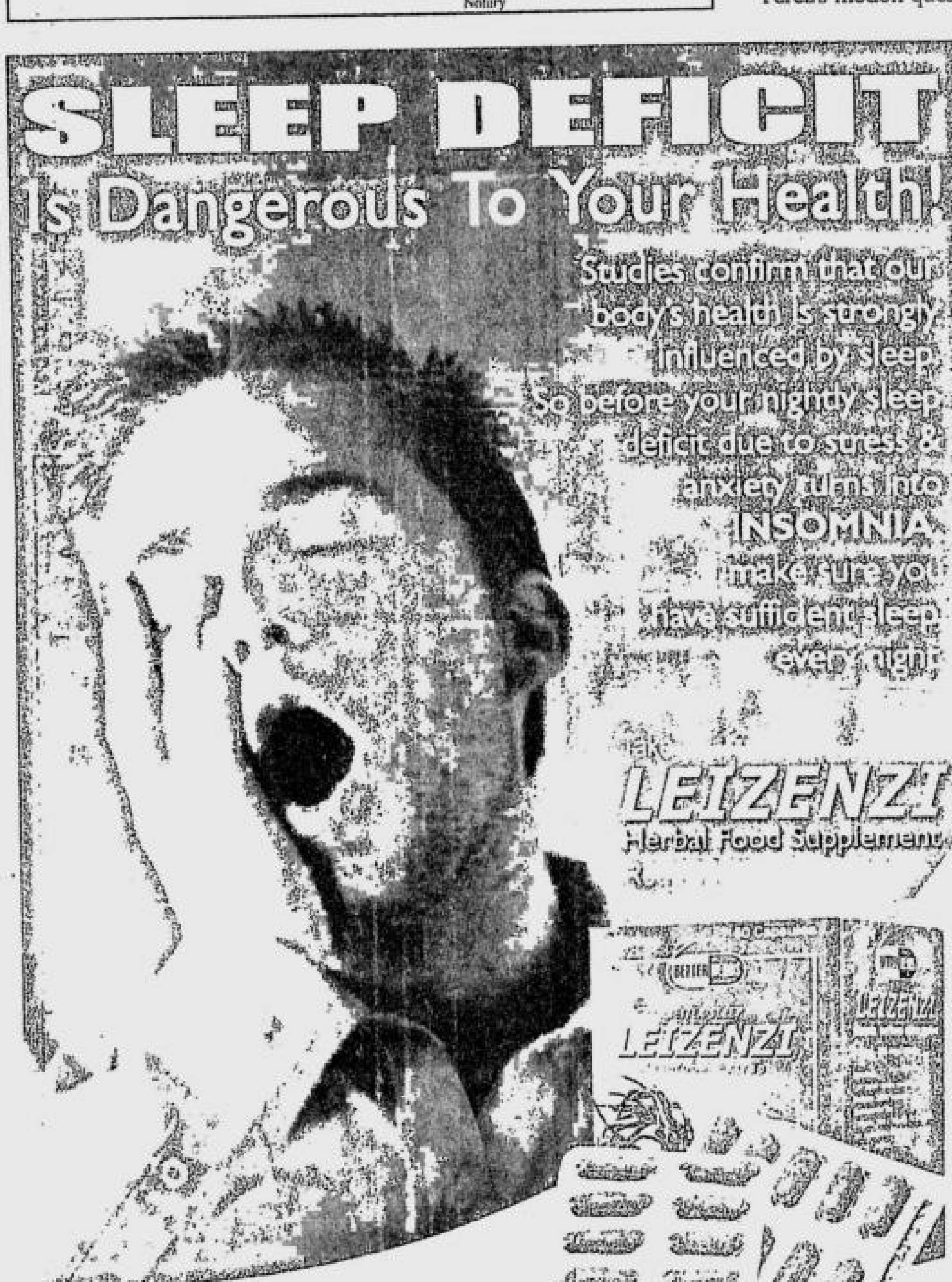
1998

- **September**—The Pasig RTC dismisses FPPC's claim that Napocor committed irregularities in its approval of the Impsa proposal. FPPC then elevates the case to the Court of Appeals but eventually withdraws it in February 1999.
- **Nov. 6**—After a month-long negotiation, Impsa signs a $450-million contract with Napocor in a ceremony witnessed by then President Joseph Estrada.

1999

- **Feb. 16**—Manila Times reports that Estrada has acted as the "unwitting godfather" to the Impsa deal. The newspaper also claims that the contract was altered at the last minute to favor the Argentine firm.
- **March 9**—Estrada files a P101-million libel case against the Gokongwei-owned Manila Times, which leads to the closure of the paper on July 26. The daily is then sold to property developer Reghis Romero II until investors led by Marcel Crespo, son of Mark Jimenez, buy Romero's shares in November.
- **November**—US firm Edison Mission Energy Philippines signs an agreement with Impsa for a 50- percent stake in CBK Power Corp., the corporate vehicle for the hydroelectric power plant.
- **July 2000**—Napocor cancels the $450-million contract with Impsa after the company failed to meet the deadline to remit a $70-million security deposit.
- **June 2003**—CBK Power reaches a settlement agreement with the government.
- **February 2004**—The Energy Regulatory Commission issues permits for the commercial operation of the CBK power complex.

Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research



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Green gas: GMA signs biofuels ...

From page A1

Biofuels Act a few days ago.

"In two years time, we will have ethanol and within a one-year period, we will have coco-biodiesel. Our agricultural sector is in a position to export to neighboring countries," said the President during a televised round table discussion.

The Biofuels Act mandates the use of biofuels such as bioethanol—alcohol produced from fermented sugar or starch—for at least 5 percent of a car's total gasoline input within two years from the effectivity of the act and one percent biodiesel for diesel input within three months.

Lobby at summit

The new law is expected not only to promote the use of a cheaper and more environment-friendly alternative to the traditional fossil fuels but it will also spur the development of the sugar, coconut and other agro-industries by providing them with a steady market for their output.

Ms Arroyo said she would lobby for the use of biofuels in the region during meetings of the East Asian summit.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said he expected the Asean and its partners in East Asia to adopt a biofuels standard during the meeting that would pave the way for exports of biodiesel from local farmers.

Ms Arroyo said: "It's important that we have an agreement in the entire region. Their trucks and cars should be able to run on this biofuel blend. We should encourage a regional standard or the production of one kind of engine, one kind of car to achieve economies of scale."

Lotilla noted that the Philippines, through the local subsidiary of American automotive giant Ford, was producing vehicles with flexible fuel engines that could run on 20 percent ethanol.

"In the program that we want realized, we wish that there be an 85-percent ethanol blend used in the entire Asian region," said Lotilla.

Salonga raps CA justice over misquote

From page A1

sion declaring "moot" Smith's appeal to be returned to US custody had been "falsified and altered."

He said the altered quote was used to justify the Philippine executive branch's actions that led to Smith's clandestine transfer on Dec. 29 to the US Embassy from the Makati City Jail despite the US Marine's pending appeal at the court.

Salonga said Bruselas, the *ponente* of the decision, may be imprisoned for the misquotation. He said the offense carried a penalty of "*aresto mayor,* or up to six years' imprisonment."

"We would like to think that Justice Bruselas, highly regarded by his peers, did not deliberately misquote [US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell] Holmes, the distinguished American jurist. [But] whatever the source, Justice Bruselas, an expert in criminal law, could be held responsible for the offense of falsification," Salonga said.

Legislatures

The 38-page decision written by Bruselas contained a quote from a US Supreme Court decision written by Holmes that supposedly recognized the executive branch as being of the same level as the judiciary in being "guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people."

Salonga pointed out that a portion of the quote attributed to the eminent magistrate read: "[The] other branches of the government are ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts."

But a check with the original US Supreme Court reports showed that Holmes had said "legislatures," and not "the other branches of the government," Salonga said.

He said the correct quote was: "Great constitutional provisions must be administered with caution. Some play must be allowed for the joints of the machine and it must be remembered that legislatures are the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts," Salonga said.

The quote as cited in the appellate court's decision was supposedly taken from a US Supreme Court ruling in the case of Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Co. vs May.

"We checked the original of the US Supreme Court Reports. It was Justice Holmes who delivered the brief opinion of the court. But to our surprise and consternation, the quotation attributed by Justice Bruselas to the eminent Justice Holmes, namely, 'the other branches of the government are ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts,' was doctored and falsified," Salonga said.

He said the supposed intent was "to make it appear that the executive branch was included [in the branches of government referred to]."

"Be it noted that [in Holmes' opinion] the state governor and his assistants or aides are not included," Salonga added in an apparent allusion to the role of President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her Cabinet in Smith's midnight transfer to the US Embassy.

No more, no less

Salonga said Bruselas may be held liable for violation of Article 171 of the Revised Penal Code "for attributing to a person a statement other than the one made by him or for making any alteration or intercalation in any genuine document which changes its meaning.

He called for "a prompt, impartial, thorough inquiry" into the matter, saying such an action, "no more and no less," was required "if we are to have an independent, less corrupt judiciary."

But Salonga said he did not believe that Bruselas had deliberately misquoted Holmes.

"A researcher or another associate for this particular case, might have been the source of the doctored or falsified quotation," he said.

'Exclusive jurisdiction'

The appellate court's ruling affirmed Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon's decision to commit Smith to the Makati City Jail, upheld the Philippines' "exclusive jurisdiction" over the American soldier, and stressed that he should be held in a Philippine detention facility for the duration of the appeals process.

But it declared Smith's appeal "moot," noting the Dec. 22 executive agreement between Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney which specified that Smith should be returned to US custody in compliance with the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement; the soldier's actual transfer to the US Embassy; as well as Justice Holmes' "wise observation."

The ruling was hailed a victory by both the camp of "Nicole," the Filipino woman who won the historic rape case, and that of the US Marine who was convicted of raping her on Nov. 1, 2005, while on shore leave at the Subic Bay Freeport.

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Cebu dateline miffs execs ...

From page A1

datelined "Cebu City." But Press Release No. 22 started with "Cebu (Philippines)" to appease local executives in Mandaue City who had complained of the "inaccuracy."

Hundreds of foreign and local journalists are covering the summit.

In an interview, Mandaue Mayor Thadeo Z. Ouano said the Cebu International Convention Center was located within his city and that news reports should reflect this.

Last month, the P500-million, hurriedly built CICC served mainly as an international media center with working rooms, briefing rooms and a broadcast center.

However, a few of the 50 meetings slated for the rescheduled summit are to be held this time at the CICC. The summit was originally scheduled to start last month but officials decided to postpone it, citing an approaching typhoon.

More appropriate

When the INQUIRER pointed out that most of the meetings—including the most important ones—were being held at the Shangri-La Hotel Mactan in Lapu-Lapu City, Ouano agreed that dropping the "City" from "Cebu" was more appropriate.

Lapu-Lapu officials did not complain about the previously used dateline.

Using more known places to describe a less-known site is a common practice. For instance, the Asian Development Bank is "Manila-based" although its headquarters is in Mandaluyong City, while passengers of budget airlines, such as Tiger Airways and Air Asia, buy tickets to and from "Manila" but they use the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Pampanga.

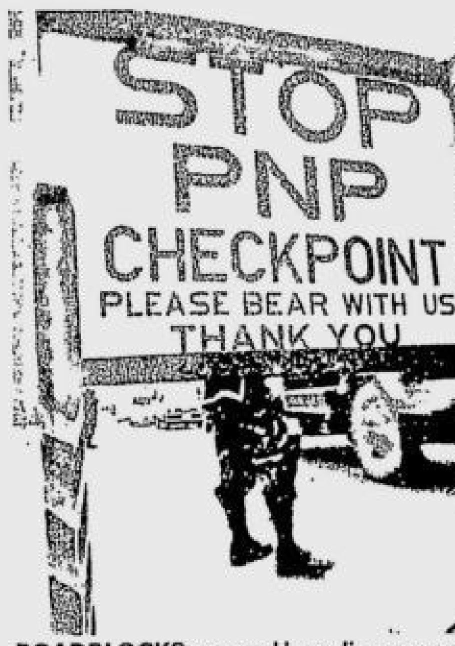
For Mandaue officials, "Metro Cebu" as a dateline would not work either, saying "there is no agency created for that" like the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. Also, there is no "Greater Cebu," unlike Greater Manila.

Opportunity

Still, Ouano said Mandaue could not afford to lose the opportunity to be mentioned as a distinct location, considering its bid to promote itself as an alternative destination of tourism and investment.

When the CICC was launched on Dec. 7 last year, in time for the start of Cebu's hosting of the Asean leaders' summit, Ouano described the occasion as Mandaue's debut as a venue for international meetings and exhibitions.

The CICC sits on a 180-hectare piece of reclaimed land. Other projects expected to rise in the area include a boardwalk, restaurant strip, marina promenade, marina and yacht club, amphitheater and park, night and flea market, retail and wellness center, visitors' center, and a water shuttle terminal.



ROADBLOCKS manned by policemen and soldiers are up in key intersections in Metro Cebu. Strictly standard procedure to secure the Asean delegates, the authorities assure, that has nothing to do with the bombings in Mindanao. REM ZAMORA

At least one Japanese firm and one Korean investor have expressed interest in building hotels in the area.

The Mandaue mayor said it would also host a permanent trade exhibition facility to support the city's export industry that accounts for up to 80 percent of the country's furniture export sales.

Mandaue projects

Ouano said the city council was planning to develop a second land reclamation project comprising 295 hectares. It has signed a memorandum of understanding with the company that developed the Hong Kong International Airport, he said.

He said the P14-billion project would cover a 50-ha export processing zone, as well as Mandaue's own international harbor and seaport.

"Mandaue's framework for development (aims at) eliminating the image of Mandaue limited to being just a gateway to Cebu City, but rather as a new growth center of the metropolis," Ouano said.

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Cebu will be wet and dreary, says Pagasa

CEBU WILL BE WET AND dreary over the next two to three days as it plays host to regional leaders during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the inter-tropical convergence zone will continue to bring rains and cloudy skies over the Visayas, including Cebu and Mindanao.

Pagasa forecaster Alwyn Armando said there will be cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms over the weekend in the Visayas and Mindanao.

"There will be times that the clouds will thin out because the rains pour down. But the ITCZ will really result in more clouds and rains in the areas," Armando said.

Armando said Pagasa believes the Asean summit will go on without a hitch as there is no tropical cyclone threatening the entire archipelago at this point.

Pagasa's weather bulletin for today, nonetheless, warned that that the cloudy and rainy weather that will be widespread over Eastern Mindanao may trigger flashfloods and landslides.

The Asean summit originally scheduled in December was cancelled due to Typhoon "Seniang." *Norman Bordadora*

NO SMOOTH SAILING for these militant fishermen on the shores of Talisay City in Cebu, who are blocked off by Navy Seals and the PNP Maritime Group as they try to paddle closer, the better for their protest to be heard about the liberalization policies of Asean and the World Trade Organization. REM ZAMORA

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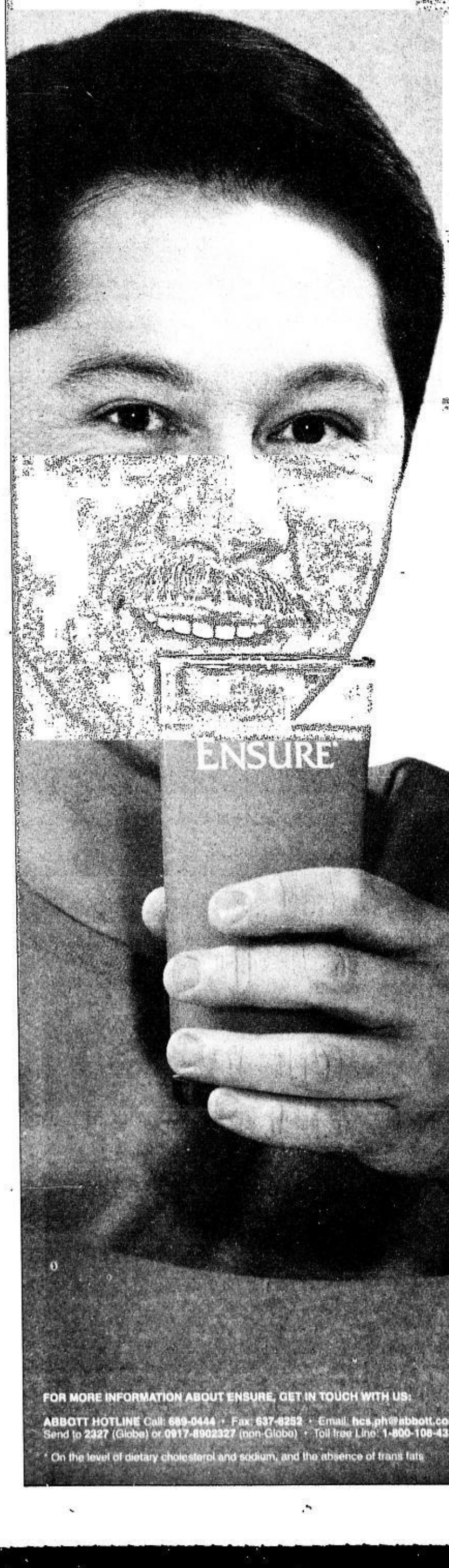

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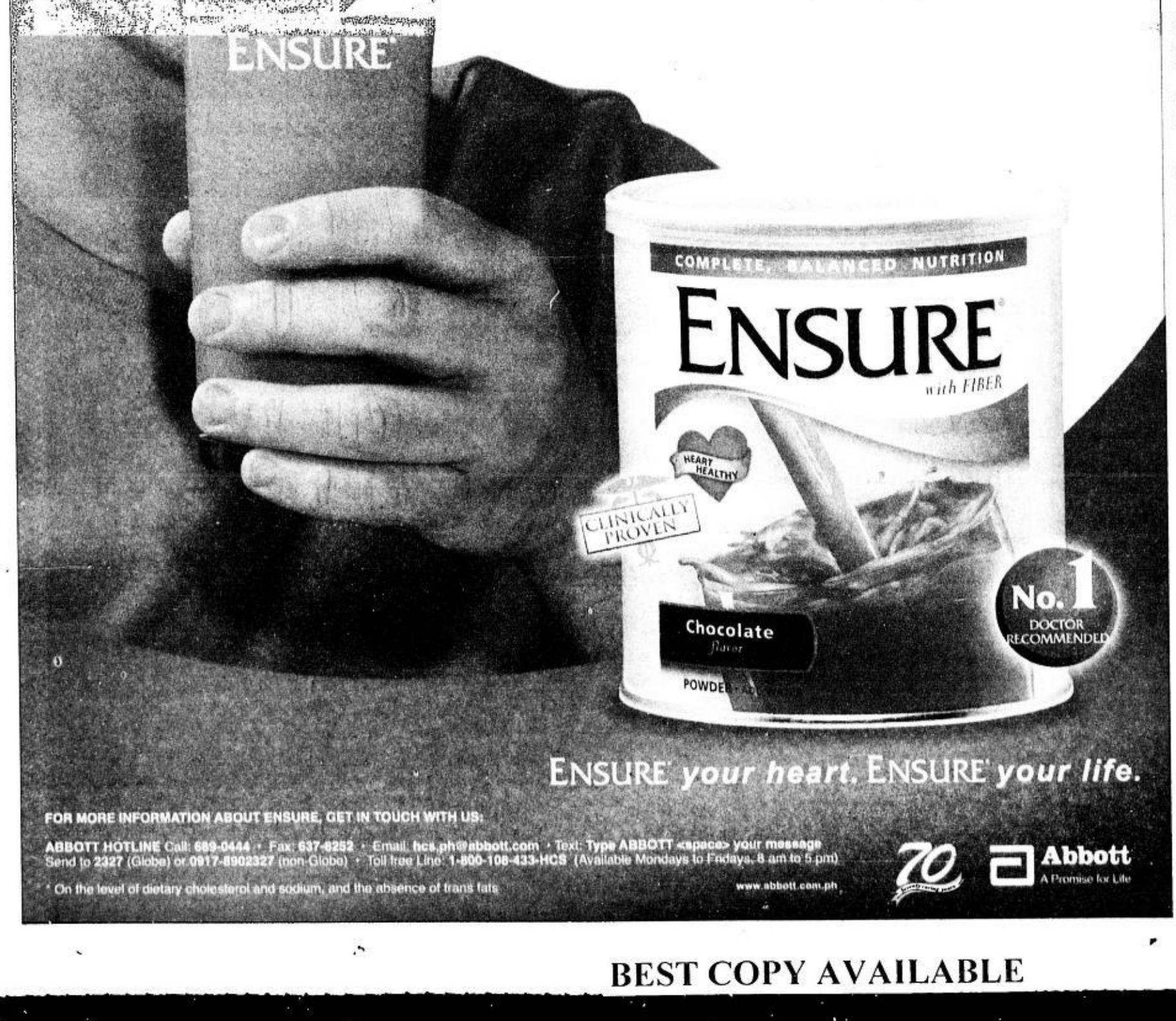

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Burma reminde political reform

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—SOUTHEAST ASIAN FOREIGN MINisters are pressing military-ruled Burma (Myanmar) to fulfill its pledge to hasten democratic reforms and free opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo reported Wednesday night.

"We express concern on the pace of the national reconciliation process and hope to see tangible progress that would lead to peaceful transition to democracy in the near future," Romulo said in a briefing, quoting from the joint communique addressed to Yangon (Rangoon) by the other nine members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"We reiterated our call for the early release of those placed under detention and for effective dialogue with all parties concerned," said Romulo, chair of the Asean standing committee, following a working dinner of Asean foreign ministers at the Shangri-La Mactan.

"We hope that Myanmar's efforts to deal with those challenges will progress so that Myanmar can effectively engage in the international community. In this regard, Asean would remain constructively engaged," he added.

Faced by a possible Western boycott of Asean meetings as well pressure within the region, Yangon

Asean economic n to keep scorecard

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NAtions' economic ministers have agreed to keep a scorecard on members' achievements regarding efforts to realize the Asean Economic Community (AEC) amid efforts to accelerate the process by five years to 2015.

Ramon Vicente T. Kabigting, who represents the country in the meetings as senior economic official, said in an interview the Asean economic ministers also agreed in a meeting Wednesday night that they should meet every six months to report on their scorecards.

"This would be done until the AEC is realized," Kabigting said. "This has been designated to the High Level Task Force (HLTF) on Asean economic intergration."

Composed of permanent secretaries, other government officials and experts from the academe, the AEM created and mandated the task force origi-

Jakarta asks 6 nations to atte

CEBU CITY—INDONESIA, WHICH HAS BEEN rocked by a series of deadly bombings in recent years, has invited six other nations to a special meeting in March on fighting terrorism, officials said yesterday.

A diplomatic source named the six as Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Australia.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo announced the Jakarta initiative Wednesday night but did not identify all the countries involved. Attorneys-general and security advisers are expected to attend.

'The show will go c

From page A1

tion for the reverses (the militants) have experienced."

At the CICC briefing, summit spokesperson Vic Lecaros said the areas that were bombed were, for him, "not legitimate targets; soft targets as they call it."

To a reporter who asked what proof the government had for it to swiftly rule out any link between the bombings and the summit, Lecaros said:

"That is precisely what they (bombers) want you to believe, and if we do so we will just rightly play into their hands ... The intention is to sow confusion and terror. And by (us) playing into their hands, they will have succeeded."

Paynor added that it was the "assessment" of his committee that there was no "connection."

"There was no indication from the other side, the perpetrators, that they were trying to make a statement," he added.

Too far to have impact

In a later statement, the NOC noted that the explosions occurred "300 miles south of Cebu City, too far away to have any impact on the Asean summit."

Four of the participating leaders—those from

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They carried a giant streamer that read "defend our fishing grounds."

About 30 activists tried to march to President Macapagal-Arroyo's regional office in Cebu but were stopped by riot police.

The 'real terrorists'

The group was protesting the clearing of slum shanties, allegedly part of a government beautification campaign for the summit, as well as limits imposed by police on public rallies.

They yelled: "The US and Gloria, they're the real terrorists," criticizing Ms Arroyo's ardent backing of the US-led campaign against terrorism.

Police officials have banned rallies near the summit venues as part of tight security. *Jolene R. Bulambot and Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas, AP*

"SHARING AND CARING:" The Asean foreign ministers strike a pose of solidarity with their host Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo (6th from left) before the start of their talks at the Shangri-La Hotel Mactan, Lapu-Lapu City. Foreign ministers, from left, Cambodia's Hor Namhong, Indonesia's Dr. Nur Hassan Wirahuja, Laos' Thongloun Sisoulith, Malaysia's Y.B. Datuk Seri Syed Hamid, Burma's (Myanmar) U Ngan Win, Romulo, Singapore's George Yong-Boon Yeo, Thailand's Nitya Pibulsongrram, Vietnam's Pham Gia Khiem, Brunei's Limjock Seng and Asean Secretary General Ong Keng Yong. EDWIN BACASMAS

d to speed up s, free Suu Kyi

passed up its turn in the organization's alphabetically rotating chairmanship and thus placed the Philippines at the helm one year ahead of schedule.

Self-declared road map

Burma's stated ground for declining, as announced by the ministers in July 2005, was that its leaders wanted to devote "full attention" to the national reconciliation and democratization process.

Asean ministers then agreed that Yangon would take the chair when it was "ready" to do so.

In a briefing yesterday, Asean Summit spokesperson Vic Lecaros noted that the ministers reiterated "Asean's concerns about the Burmese leaders' "adherence to their self-declared road map toward democracy."

Lecaros said fresh calls were made for the release of "detainees who really count," such as Suu Kyi and key figures in her party, the National League for Democracy, which decisively won the general elections in 1990 but was subsequently denied power by the junta.

"There have been releases in recent days," Lecaros noted, but Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, and top officials of her NLD remain detained.

The United Nations has estimated there are about 1,100 political prisoners in Burma, which has been under military rule since 1962.

inisters agree on achievements

nally to look into the feasibility of a regional free trade area, the benefits that might be derived from the FTA, the possible structure and the capacity-building measures required for countries to participate effectively in the negotiation process.

Under the Bali Concord II that was signed in 2003, the 10-member Asean agreed to take up the recommendations of the HLTF, which included measures to ease movement of goods, services and tourists and business people within the region.

Concerning goods, the HLTF proposed zero internal tariffs; immediate removal of barriers to trade; faster customs clearance and simplified customs procedures; accelerated development of mutual recognition agreements concerning persons; and harmonization of products standards and technical regulations.

As for services, the task force proposed accelerated liberalization of these priority sectors by 2010; accelerated development of MRAs; and promotion of joint ventures and cooperation, including in third country markets.

nd meet vs terror

Saturday's summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is due to sign a landmark convention on counter-terrorism.

"Indonesia has taken the lead in inviting six nations to a meeting of intelligence, military and other agencies involved in counter-terrorism to a meeting in Jakarta in March," Romulo said.

"We are all attending that meeting precisely to look at how we can implement and carry out the convention on counterterrorism." *AFP*

n? . . .

Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, and Burma (Myanmar)—were expected to arrive in Cebu yesterday between 4 p.m. and midnight. The rest were to follow today and tomorrow.

Asean senior officials and ministers resumed their meetings here Wednesday, about a month after the host government postponed the event, citing the approaching Typhoon "Seniang."

The summit proper—to begin on Saturday up to Monday—brings together the 10-member Asean dialogue partners Australia, China, Japan, India, South Korea and New Zealand.

Counterterrorism

Along with strengthening joint counterterrorism measures, officials say the summit will focus on creating an Asean charter similar to the one used by the EU. The charter is long overdue, but officials said it still remains in the early formative stages.

The other main points of the documents were the expansion of free and fair trade, a switch from fossil fuels to biofuels and the protection of migrant workers.

The Philippines, meanwhile, offered to host the next round of the so-called "six-party" talks on the denuclearization of North Korea. The offer was made during a meeting with China's foreign minister. No place or date for the talks has been decided upon.

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Marking time

EDITORIAL

IT MUST HAVE BEEN UNFLATTERING TO THE TOP brass. But the three-part special report on the Armed Forces of the Philippines, written by free-lance investigative reporters Yvonne Chua and Luz Rimban and published in the INQUIRER from Jan. 8 to 11, should disconcert the public even more, albeit for different reasons.

It is not because the report presented unpleasant surprises; in fact, it only further confirmed many widely held perceptions and concerns about the military. More significantly, the report sounded a very clear warning that if the worsening corruption and lack of professionalism inside the AFP are not arrested, the Filipino people and the soldiers themselves could wake up one day to find the institution their defender no more or no longer in a position to protect them.

Ten years ago, Congress passed Republic Act 7898, also known as the AFP Modernization Act. With that law, the AFP "should have been a modern, professional force capable of dealing with both external and internal security concerns." Instead, the AFP Modernization Program (AFPMP) "is still where it was 10 years ago—in square one," and no less than the government practically admits this, said the report, which was based mostly on findings by the Commission on Audit.

Another problem pulling back the AFPMP is red tape and inefficiency, apparently abetted by corruption and the lack of professionalism with the AFP. Chua and Rimban noted that it takes AFP "23 steps to procure weapons and other defense equipment" and as a result, "not a single weapon or equipment had been acquired or upgraded under the AFPMP from 2000 to 2002." Up to this time, only 24 percent of the priority projects under the AFPMP, worth billions of pesos, have been completed, the report noted. The consequence is that the AFP today "is not capable of addressing the insurgency threats from the CPP-NPA and the Moro secessionists," according to Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff.

Why the AFP remains in that state is mainly because the bonds of brotherhood and code of silence discourage transparency and scrutiny of misdeeds, Chua and Rimban concluded. The report mentioned a COA auditor who quit the agency "out of disgust" after the audit team she was heading "was not allowed to further investigate the AFP, and its findings were not acted upon."

But perhaps nothing exemplifies this anomaly better than the case of retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and the fate of the Mayuga Report. Garcia, a former AFP comptroller, was meted out a two-year prison term—a mere slap on the wrist—by a court martial for siphoning off millions of AFP funds into his bank accounts, a good chunk of them taken out of the country by the thousands of dollars at a time. He was acquitted by the Sandiganbayan of perjury for misdeclarations in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth for the year 1990, though he is still facing, before the same civil court, graft charges for allegedly amassing P285-million worth of ill-gotten wealth.

The Mayuga Report, prepared by an AFP fact-finding board chaired by Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga (later appointed Navy chief), cleared three high-ranking AFP officials implicated in the alleged electoral fraud that supposedly ensured the victory of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 elections. However, the full text and content of the report has yet to be made public. The three officials were themselves later appointed by the President to various coveted positions: two in the military establishment, and one in a civilian office.

Military officials would be deceiving themselves if they believe that they have put closure to the Mayuga Report and the Garcia case. The way they have handled these cases have actually raised more questions than answers. With the spate of extrajudicial killings (lately starting to take its toll on politicians) being widely blamed on military, not even AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. would deny that the organization's public image need some refurbishing.

At the very least, the special report of Chua and Rimban should tell military officials that society expects more from the AFP. And they should take the report not as an indictment of the military establishment but as a reminder for the AFP leadership to exercise professionalism in the truest sense of the word. Only then can genuine reforms take root in the institution that they profess to cherish.

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Albay priest refutes Lagman's claims

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

"HE IS ONE OF US."

With these words, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita declared former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez "innocent" of extorting $2 million from former Rep. Mark Jimenez. He meant Perez was a member of the Arroyo administration and therefore he could not have done anything wrong.

Little did Ermita realize that his effort to help his fellow Batangueño only put Perez in a deeper hole. Being associated with the Arroyo administration is a kiss of death. That is why Cabinet members being touted as senatorial candidates of the administration are jumping off the ticket. They don't want to run in the administration ticket. That is why Ermita himself does not want to be a candidate.

There are many things queer in the Perez case. Why did Cabinet members immediately jump in to clear him of any crime and GMA of any involvement in the extortion case? Ermita was never asked what he thought of the Perez case, yet he immediately declared Perez "innocent." Nobody said GMA was involved in the case, yet Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor immediately declared that she could not have anything to do with it. Why the hurry to clear them?

And as the opposition wondered, why was the charge only extortion (which is bailable) and not plunder (which is not bailable) when the amount involved is $2 million, equivalent to almost double the P50 million minimum that the law says automatically makes the crime plunder?

In a plunder case, Perez can turn state witness and testify who got the remaining $12 million of the $14-million bribe for the approval of the Impsa contract. Which is probably why the administration is helping Perez, instead of letting the law take its own course: to prevent him from turning state witness.

For instance, he can say why he submitted an opinion in favor of Impsa just two days after GMA took over the presidency from Erap, and why she immediately approved it.

The message to Perez seems to be: Don't spill the beans. We won't abandon you. We will help you.

But if I were Perez, why would I cover up for those who got the lion's share of the bribe? And even if the President promises to pardon him if he is convicted of extortion, he would still have to go to prison. So he should just turn state witness and tell the truth. The truth shall set you free.

* * *

In a letter published in the Letters section of the INQUIRER last Jan. 6, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman claimed that I "saw it all wrong" when I wrote in my Dec. 27, 2006 column about his absence from his district to help his constituents in the aftermath of Typhoon Reming and the controversy regarding the distribution of relief goods from the Department of Social Welfare and Development that were stamped with the name of Lagman's daughter, who is running for mayor. He assailed "Bishop" Ramon Tronqued who had refused to accept the relief goods because they were being given with deceit and for political purposes.

Msgr. (not Bishop) Ramon Tronqued faxed an urgent letter refuting Lagman's letter point by point and asked me to publish it. Here it is:

"I am the priest referred to in your column regarding the conflict in the relief distribution for Typhoon Reming victims in Tabaco City, Albay. I admire and thank you for putting the matter to your readers' attention. But the hyperbolic reaction of Rep. Edcel Lagman to your column, mentioning my name among others, while fabricating actions and intentions on my part and other parish workers, prods me to write this letter in the interest of truth and honesty.

"1. I am not a bishop as Lagman referred to me. I am the parish priest of St. John the Baptist in Tabaco City. If he ever attended Mass in the church, a few meters from his district office, he could easily have known this fact.

"2. Sure, his son is not running for mayor. His daughter is. She announced over a local radio station such intention a few months ago.

"3. Yes, I stopped last Dec. 4 the distribution of relief goods to the evacuees inside the compound of our Parish Pastoral Center because it was done with malice and deceit. Earlier that day, I approached the city mayor (the brother-in-law of Lagman) and sought assistance for our evacuees who had been at the center for five days already.

"Later that same day, DSWD personnel came to us and informed us that they were distributing relief from the DSWD. But lo and behold, the goods that they claimed to be from the DSWD had the name of Lagman's daughter stamped on each plastic pack. Now Lagman writes that those persons were 'relief workers' of his daughter. But no one who came to us ever mentioned that they were relief workers of Lagman. On the contrary, the spokesperson of the group claimed in my presence that they were from the DSWD. If indeed the relief goods were from Lagman, they could have simply said so and there would have been no problem in the distribution. So why the deceit?

"Such duplicity, compounded by widespread reports that NFA rice was being repacked in a local warehouse, prompted me to ask them to leave the church premises and distribute their goods somewhere else. Then the congressman concludes that my conduct was 'unchristian.' Since when has standing firm against deceit been unchristian?

"4. Lagman accuses me of being 'partisan and prejudiced,' claiming that I support the mayoral candidacy of Vice Mayor Oscar Rocha because 'a priest distributed relief items to the Pastoral Center evacuees in the name of Rocha earlier that day.' Fabrication. No relief goods were distributed at the center earlier that day—not by a priest, not by anybody else."

(To be continued.)

Just what GMA ordered

COMMENTARY

Minguita Padilla, M.D.

A MUCH ANTICIPATED ASSEMBLY OF THE "United Opposition" finally took place last Jan. 5 in preparation for choosing its senatorial lineup, and, as expected, the media took notice. All of Friday night, radio and television were littered with excerpts of interviews of those who stood out the most in this assembly, all with one common message reflecting the only common thread that holds them together. Bitter, taunting and fighting words spewed from the mouths of the prominent strategists and jaded politicians which, simply put, had but one message: they were all "anti-GMA"—nothing more, nothing less.

The same message accompanied a photograph of the group that was published in almost all newspapers, a rather disturbing photograph that, while not including former President Joseph Estrada, might as well have had his face and signature all over it. As a result, the majority of the nation, or at least those clamoring for positive and genuine change breathed a sigh of dismay.

And above this collective sigh of dismay one could almost hear the sigh of relief, even an amused chuckle, from the GMA camp.

There is no doubt that never in the history of our country have we seen so much duplicity, deception, confusion, arrogance and impunity, as we have under the Arroyo administration. Never in our history have we witnessed so many of our institutions torn apart and damaged almost methodically as a means for political survival as we have in the last few years. Never in our history have we, as a people, been as emotionally battered as we are today. So battered are we that many have taken refuge in cynicism and apathy, having nothing to hold on to but the hope that by playing their cards right, they may find a ticket out of the country. Those of us who stay do our best to live productive lives, to do our share in nation building. But so dysfunctional has our government and society become that many have had to learn how to dance with the wolves just to survive, always careful not to be devoured in the process.

This dismal picture notwithstanding, we are not without hope. Many want to fight against the bleakness. Indeed, many are poised for battle. If only we had a united opposition that could present us with leaders that could inspire us and help us break free of the darkness.

Estrada is a sincere man whose many years of incarceration for plunder charges have no doubt brought about positive changes in his person. His was such a wasted mandate, and he has probably spent so many sleepless nights praying for another chance at power, perhaps vowing to himself and to God that, given this second chance, he would do things right, if not for the people, then at least for the sake of his name and legacy. But politics is also a perception game, and no matter how good his intentions are (and I am willing to give him the benefit of this doubt), it does the opposition no good that he remains its symbol and rallying point.

It doesn't help either at all that many of those running the opposition campaign and running for office are personalities who, no matter what their intentions now, are themselves perceived as even more guilty than those now in power of sickening acts of betrayal, not just against the Filipino people but even against political allies and friends. Many of those now loudly throwing poison darts at President Macapagal-Arroyo are themselves guilty of helping wreak damage on our political system through the years.

Humility is a hallmark of true greatness. And so it is the prayer of many that the former president and other key members of the opposition heed the call of true greatness and realize that they must take a back seat this time around. It is not the time for them to hog the limelight. Rather they must give way to leaders who can offer us more than just negative and recycled politics but the politics of hope.

It is not too late. Perhaps if they do this, then there would be no need for a "third force" that might only weaken the chances of an opposition victory as we would already see a sufficient number of true alternative leaders before us.

We cannot fight the prevailing evils of deceit, duplicity and arrogance with more of the same. GMA and her people have mastered the game and the opposition cannot win in the same game. We cannot beat back the emotional, spiritual and psychological assaults of this administration with a counter barrage of bitter rhetoric. All these are but empty words. We can only fight back through the calm and refreshing air of truth, spoken out and acted upon with steadfastness and courage.

There are leaders among us who fit this bill. Unfortunately, many are drowned out in the ruckus, while the media and kingmakers keep their focus on a coterie of jaded politicians and celebrities who offer neither hope nor positive change, only a label that might as well read: "Just what GMA ordered."

Dr. Minguita Padilla is president of the Eye Bank Foundation of the Philippines and president of the Drug Abuse Research Foundation (DARE).

US isolation

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ISOLATION OF THE UNITED STATES IN Asia over its war strategy in Iraq was underscored on Thursday, when only three of its original Asian allies in the "coalition of the willing"—South Korea, Australia and Japan—backed President George W. Bush's new policy to increase US troops in Iraq by more than 20,000 troops.

The stony silence of the rest of Asia to Bush's new effort to extricate the US from the deepening quagmire was even more deafening as the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) ignored his speech. There was hardly any comment from the Asean core countries, including the Philippines, meeting at their summit now under way in Cebu City.

The Bush speech to the US Congress had no resonance at the summit at all. President Macapagal-Arroyo echoed Asean's more immediate concern over Asean integration when she said in a keynote statement that "the Philippines hosts the Asean summit at a time that the whole region is taking stock of the present and planning ahead for the future." She added that "great stakes are involved in the continuing integration of entire East Asia, which is driven by strong centripetal forces to close ranks for a safer and more secure community, more open and equitable trade, cooperation in all fronts of energy development, and the prosperity of its diverse peoples."

This statement sent a message to Washington, something like "Iraq, is none of our business, and that's your headache," although the summit, originally scheduled last December, was postponed amid reports that terrorists linked to Asian networks of al-Qaida planned to attack the summit.

The leaders of Australia, South Korea and Japan—a few of the remaining members of the "coalition of the willing," which has thinned considerably since the invasion of Iraq four years ago—are to join the summit at Cebu as external partners of Asean.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said in Sydney, in support of the new Bush strategy, "If America retreats in Iraq, then that has enormous consequences for the security of the region and it will also be an enormous boost to terrorism in our part of the world." Howard, whose country has 1,300 troops in Iraq, called Bush's plan "very clear, calm and above all, realistic." But his statement had no echo from Asean members at the summit.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro said Tokyo would continue its humanitarian aid for the reconstruction of Baghdad. He said, "I strongly believe that the US efforts toward stability in Iraq and reconstruction will...bring good results" and predicted that "Japan will continue to closely...cooperate with the US." Japan withdrew its 600 non-combat ground troops from Iraq last year.

While South Korea expressed support for Bush's new policy, Seoul maintains 2,300 troops in northern Iraq in support of US-led forces, making it Washington's biggest coalition partner. However, Seoul plans to withdraw 1,100 troops by April.

In announcing his new war strategy, Bush said the increased troop deployment would help break the cycle of violence in Iraq and hasten the day when US troops will be able to come home. The key measures announced by Bush include: raising troop numbers by more than 20,000 to more than 150,000 to improve the Iraqi security forces' capacity to protect the civilian population; setting political benchmarks for the Iraqi government, with a warning that US commitment to Iraq is not "open-ended"; a $1-billion aid and reconstruction program to economically develop Iraq.

Bush said the majority of the new troops would be sent to Baghdad and fight alongside Iraqi units to secure neighborhood from "terrorists and terrorists." He said he had made a mistake in not ordering more troops to Iraq last year.

The new strategy flew into the face of warnings from the Democratic majority in Congress who had called for a pullout from an open-ended US military presence in Iraq. Opinion surveys conducted last month put approval for Bush's handling of the war at record low, with a majority of voters interviewed in exit polls during the midterm election favoring pulling some or all US troops from Iraq.

The BBC noted that Bush's new plan had echoes of Vietnam "in the belief that another push will get the job done." Bush rejects comparison of Iraq with Vietnam. The Vietnam syndrome has left strong memories in Asia, and the escalation of US involvement in Vietnam was widely criticized in the region.

Although history does not repeat itself, analysts recall parallels that are interesting and hard to ignore. According to them, there is the realization in "Washington that it is not winning. Bush has admitted this himself." There is a policy of trying to hand over responsibility to the local government in the midst of battle, which was what happened in Vietnam with the policy of Vietnamization. And there is the belief of the US administration that more troops are an important part of the answer.

According to these analysts, there are major differences. Among them is that Vietnam deployment was on larger scale. The US deployed more than half a million troops. It was fighting against the regular North Vietnamese Army as well as the Vietcong insurgency. Despite the escalated troop deployment the North Vietnamese army and the Vietcong launched the Tet offensive in January 1968. Although the offensive was beaten off, it was considered the turning point of the war.

In 1975, the North Vietnamese marched into Saigon, leading to the expulsion of US troops from Vietnam.

Filipino Nazarene

QUIAPO'S BLACK NAZARENE IS PERHAPS THE MOST publicly venerated religious image in the country. The much beloved Santo Niño is, well, beloved, pampered as a child would be, recreated and renamed many times over. But the Nazarene is held in awe, as we saw earlier this week when an estimated 100,000 people jostled and sometimes even fought each other for a chance to touch the image.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The Nazarene's power is in its imagery, a suffering Christ carrying his cross on which he is to be crucified. He appeals to those who suffer, in whatever form and for whatever reason. And they come not just on Jan. 9 but every other day of the year, streaming into Quiapo's church to join the long queues for a chance to touch the image as they make a request.

Perhaps "supplication" is a better term. I doubt if people actually call out to the Black Nazarene. Officially, he is Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno (Our Father Jesus Nazarene). A booklet from the church has his image on the cover and the caption "Jesus Nazareno de Quiapo," almost a way of declaring he is Quiapo's.

And indeed he is, if we speak of where he is enshrined. Yet, the image did not originate in Quiapo, or the Philippines. It was crafted in Mexico and entrusted to a Recollect priest and then transported on a galleon to the Philippines, no one knowing when exactly but the year 1606 is usually cited because that was when the first group of Recollect friars arrived in the Philippines.

There are actually two Nazarene images. In the late 1990s, the Nazarene's face was damaged by a bullet, so Quiapo's church administrators decided to take more precautions. Today, on the main altar is a statue, not accessible to the public, that carries the original 17th century head. On a side altar is another Nazarene with the original body, still there for people to touch.

The Nazarene comes out several times a year, almost as if to greet his many devotees. Besides Jan. 9, there are processions on Jan. 1, on the Sunday preceding Holy Week (for a Way of the Cross) and on Good Friday. The image that is used is the one from the side altar, except this year, when the original head and body were reattached for the grand procession to Luneta and back to Quiapo.

Touched

Touch is so important in the venerations. Inside the church, devotees touch the foot or the cross. During the processions, they try to get on the *carroza* transporting the Nazarene, again to touch the image. Those who are less physically fit have another recourse, and this is to throw a handkerchief or a towel to the *carroza*, for the Nazareno's guardians to rub on the image. The cloth, now "touched," is then thrown back. . .hopefully to the owner.

Touch is magical because that physical contact is seen as vital to getting the powers of a venerated image. In touching, one is touched. Touch takes on a temporal dimension as well, with the belief that the Nazarene is even more potent on Jan. 9. This year, Quiapo's administrators organized several days of devotions, including, on Jan. 8, transporting the Nazarene from Quiapo to the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta, where there would be more space for devotees, who were asked to queue up so they could touch the Nazarene. That was almost symbolic, given that when the Nazarene came over from Mexico in the 17th century, it landed in Bagumbayan, now known as Luneta.

But thousands still decided to join the crowds on Jan. 9, as the Nazarene was transported back to Quiapo from Luneta.

It is in Quiapo where devotees compete to touch the Nazarene. ABS/CBN's cameras dutifully captured Pinky Webb following the footsteps of Noli de Castro, helped along by other devotees so she could get on to the *carroza*. (Do I hear jokes about ABS/CBN becoming not just a political party, but also a religious *cofradia*?)

The Nazarene devotions are not a matter of "*pagdadasal*" or prayers but of "*panata*" or vows. There is supplication here, but there is also negotiation: I will devote my life to you, if you would just grant my wish. It is not a demand, certainly, but the implicit message is that one goes through hardship to get to the image, whether on Jan. 9, which I see almost as a masculine ritual of religiosity, or on any other day of the year, for the more feminine rituals, which, mind you, are not necessarily less difficult, as when devotees make their way up to the altar on their knees.

Quiapo

Many people presume that Jan. 9 is Quiapo's fiesta date. It is not. The Quiapo parish's patron saint is St. John the Baptist, whose feast day is on June 24. In a way then, the Nazarene is Quiapo's guest, but a very important guest who honors the house he's visiting. And if the Nazarene is perceived to be so miraculous, then Quiapo church itself, and its environs, takes on some of the attributed power.

It's not surprising Quiapo has attracted brokers for all kinds of power, from vendors of *anting-anting* (amulets) and medicinal plants to fortune-tellers offering some control over life's uncertainties. It's not surprising, too, that Quiapo church administrators appealed to politicians, right before this year's Nazarene festivities, not to exploit the devotions for electioneering. Some politicians still showed up, attempting to bask in the Nazarene's aura.

Devotees also watched the procession unfold almost with trepidation, worried about any damage to the statue, or the *carroza* ropes slackening, or, the Nazarene forbid, fatal accidents—all, people believe, omens of a bleak year for the nation. To the relief of devotees, this year's procession passed almost uneventfully, except for the usual fainting and minor injuries.

Watching the Nazarene devotions, on Jan. 9 and the rest of the year, always reminds me that Quiapo isn't just a central district in Manila. Quiapo is in many ways the center of the Philippines, a crossroads where Filipinos of all ages, genders, classes, ethnicities and religion converge. People go to Quiapo's church to pour out their troubles; in effect, the Nazarene has to "listen" to the nation's many trials and tribulations. But people don't go to Quiapo in desperate resignation; they're there to strategize and negotiate. Here, the *panata* is not just a vow of religious devotions, but also a vow to take on life's challenges, emboldened by the pilgrimage to Quiapo and the Nazarene.

After four centuries, the Nazarene is Quiapo's, but precisely because it is Quiapo's, it is, too, the nation's—a Filipino Nazarene.

* * *

Correction to Wednesday's column: I learned from our readers' advocate, Lorna Tirol, that Marietta Giron has been ill and has not been handling the INQUIRER's consumer column for some time now. Instead, we have Linda Bolido, whom you can write to at lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.

Also, it is Raul Concepcion, not his twin Jose Concepcion, who does the oil watch.

Mike A's lucky libel streak

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LAST WEDNESDAY, THE EDITORS OF THE newsmagazine Newsbreak were arraigned at the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 6 on charges of libel filed by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

The case is one of almost 40 libel complaints filed by Arroyo against various media people and media outlets, almost all of which have found favor with government prosecutors, a remarkable lucky streak in a country where libel complaints rarely prosper to the next stage, let alone end in a trial.

Three Newsbreak editors were arraigned: Marites Danguilan Vitug, editor-in-chief; Glenda M. Gloria, managing editor; and Ricky Carandang, the former business editor.

This particular libel charge stems from a short "Inside Track" item that came out in the Dec. 8, 2003 issue following a Newsbreak cover story on the Arroyos' undeclared properties in San Francisco, California. The item said that in the course of the magazine's research on the California properties, Newsbreak got leads from reliable sources about two houses, allegedly owned by the President's husband. It went on to explain that after research on the ownership and acquisition details of these properties, for which the item provided the exact location, the documents they accessed "yielded names that could not be linked to the First Gentleman." It said, though, that sources told the magazine that "the one who supposedly acquired the properties for Mr. Arroyo was a male relative of his who's into (the) real estate business in California."

It was the Newsbreak editors' contention that the article "was very transparent." In a statement, they said that the item clearly stated that "these were leads and that we pursued them and stated our findings," and that the preceding week's cover story "provides proper context to this follow-up article."

* * *

BUT in his resolution dated Nov. 13, 2006, assistant Manila prosecutor Fredy Gomez found that the editors "meant and intended to convey false and malicious insinuations" against Arroyo, "imputed...a crime" and therefore was "highly libelous and offensive and derogatory to the good name, character and reputation...of the First Gentleman." Gomez also found that the article in question was "solely prepared, written and published by the accused for no other purpose than to impeach and besmirch" the President's husband.

As an aside, I wonder how Gomez reached this conclusion. Did he perhaps have special access to the minds of the people who prepared the short item? Was he privy to the proceedings of an editorial meeting where the Newsbreak editors plotted to destroy Arroyo's good name, character and reputation?

In a statement that Carandang was prepared to read in court during the arraignment, but was prevented from doing by the judge, the accused journalists expressed their "grave concern" that "there is an attempt to redefine libel and use criminal prosecution to intimidate the press." Carandang, Vitug and Gloria also said they were willing to go through the trial "to defend and protect our profession, one that we truly love. We know that this will be a test case for Philippine journalism."

* * *

OF COURSE, as Arroyo's lawyer and his defenders in the media assert, everyone has the right to sue for libel.

Well, not everyone. Everyone except public officials (because of the nature of their job and the public's right to information) and public figures, broadly defined as anyone who seeks public attention as part of his/her profession (actors, models, endorsers, advocates, journalists), as well as people whose actuations have an impact on the public welfare, to which category I think Arroyo firmly belongs.

He is certainly not an "ordinary private citizen." He is married to a public official, for one, and his mere presence by the President's side at official functions makes him share in her "official" nature. Moreover, the stories that provoked Arroyo enough to sue for libel had nothing to do with his person—or maybe only tangentially—and were concerned with allegations of conduct that had a direct impact on good governance and public finances.

Here's the full text of a statement issued by the arraigned editors of Newsbreak:

* * *

WE are deeply concerned that the First Gentleman, Mike Arroyo, is not using this libel suit to seek legitimate redress. Rather he is redefining libel, a clear affront to the Philippine press.

As we know, the test of libel is the presence of malice. But Mr. Arroyo disregards this basic tenet and recklessly uses libel to intimidate and silence the press. The message we're getting is this: Anything that hints of criticism of the First Gentleman or is considered unfavorable coverage of his activities is "libelous."

In effect, he hinders the public's right to information on matters of public concern.

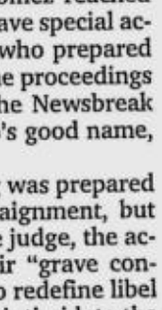
Moreover, Mr. Arroyo misunderstands the role of the press. Never in the course of our work do we write "solely to besmirch" the reputation of a person. Our foremost duty is to inform readers on issues that are vital to public interest. Mr. Arroyo is only one among many public figures we have written about.

We want to stress that we have chosen to be journalists because we are convinced of the value of a free and responsible press in a democracy, which is to promote transparency and accountability in society, serve as government watchdog, and keep the citizenry informed so that they can participate actively in public life.

We believe in independent journalism whereby journalists report without fear or favor and keep the public interest at heart. The professionalism which has characterized our work, independently of each other, and together at Newsbreak, is the same professionalism that we have used in reporting on public figures.

The Thirteen Martyrs

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

YESTERDAY A BRASS BAND PLAYED ROUSING music in Plaza Moriones, Tondo, Manila, competing with the ambient sound of jeeps, trucks and people going to work early in the morning. It was the 110th anniversary of the execution of Domingo Franco (1856-1897) whose bronze bust was the focal point of commemoration and the plaza.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who was not in the trademark Hawaiian shirt, arrived before the floral offering and made a walk-through inspection of the barangay, surprising street sweepers who did not do a good job that morning. Celia Diaz Laurel, granddaughter of Domingo Franco, led a small group of the hero's descendants, including Julio Diaz, who disappointed fans who expected the movie star and not the distinguished gentleman in the second row.

Domingo Franco was executed in Bagumbayan in the early morning of Jan. 11, 1897 on or around the same place where Rizal fell dead 12 days earlier. Franco is a member of the group remembered in history as the "Thirteen Martyrs of Bagumbayan." Unfortunately, we know the title of the tragic event, but we do not remember the individual names of all these heroes, and why they were executed. Nobody needs to know them unless you are a student taking an exam in Makabayan or Ḥekasi. The names of these Thirteen Martyrs are plain useless information unless, of course, you come across them as a nervous contestant in "Game ka na ba?" where this trivia may open the opportunity for a million-peso windfall.

For whatever it is worth and to remind us of the other 12 heroes who were not mentioned in Plaza Moriones yesterday, here is the list of the Thirteen Martyrs:

1. Domingo Franco was a tobacco merchant who was originally from Capiz but moved to Manila. One of the founding members of Liga Filipina, he knew Jose Rizal and was said to have distributed the "Noli me tangere" and "El Filibusterismo" when it was dangerous to read or own a copy. He helped raise money to send to the so-called Propaganda Movement in Spain and for these, he was arrested, tortured and eventually executed.

2. Numerio Adriano (1846-1897) was a lawyer and a Mason. He knew Rizal and Apolinario Mabini. Being a founding member of Liga Filipina, he was also implicated in the Katipunan.

3. Moises Salvador (1868-1897) studied at the Ateneo Municipal and took further studies in Madrid. He knew Rizal and he was a Mason and a member of Liga Filipina—just the right mix to be included in the group executed in early 1897.

4. Francisco L. Roxas (1851-1897) was a musician and businessman. He would probably be better known today had his musical compositions survived, but then his life was cut short when he was implicated in the Katipunan revolt. He protested this and maintained his innocence, but since his name was on a list that was found by the authorities, he became a reluctant hero and joined the Thirteen Martyrs of Bagumbayan.

5. Jose Dizon was an engraver in Casa de Moneda in Manila. He was involved in the Katipunan, having joined a group that met sympathetic Japanese for the procurement of arms for the revolution. Like all the other members of the Thirteen Martyrs, he too was a Mason.

6. Benedicto Nijaga, a second lieutenant in the Spanish army, was reputedly a good soldier. But his loyalty became suspect when he was connected to the Katipunan revolt. We do not know whether his name was on a list of Katipuneros found during the raid of the printing shop of Diario de Manila, or whether he was implicated by an enemy or somebody who had been tortured.

7. Cristobal Medina was a Filipino corporal in the Spanish army, yet his loyalty remained with his country and his countrymen so he joined the Katipunan and was supposed to have helped plan the uprising in San Juan del Monte on Aug. 30, 1896. For this act, real or imagined, he was implicated.

8. Antonio Salazar was a businessman originally from Cavite and owned Bazaar El Cisne. It was from his confession, extracted by torture, that others were implicated in the Katipunan, particularly Domingo Franco.

9. Ramon A. Padilla, an employee of the Manila customs house, was rude to Emilio Aguinaldo who nursed a grudge against him that almost led to a duel. He later apologized to Aguinaldo, and this probably saved his life for the moment, but only until Jan. 11, 1897 .

10. Faustino Villaruel (1841-1897) was a merchant from Pandacan and a Mason like all the others. He was also a founding member of Liga Filipina, and supporter of the Propaganda Movement.

11. Braulio Rivera (1867-1897) was a member of the Katipunan.

12. Luis Enciso Villareal (1846-1897) was originally from Daraga, Albay, and was known for his graceful dancing and his fiddle playing. He read a French manual on tailoring and opened a shop in Escolta, where he conducted brisk business. He won the lottery and traveled in Japan. He was probably implicated with the Katipunan because he was a Mason and a member of Liga Filipina, and contributed to the Propaganda Movement.

13. Eustacio Manalac is the person we know so little about. Nobody has even done basic research to even find out his date of birth and simple biographical data like marital status, children, occupation, etc. All we are told is that he was a Mason and was rounded up as a suspected Katipunero when the Katipunan was exposed in August 1896.

(Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu)

Questions haunting nation should be answered in 2007 elections

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

AS A REGISTERED VOTER, HERE IS A suggestion, together with a few questions, that I would like to submit to the President for her consideration.

She must select the best and the brightest senatorial candidates who can withstand the rigors of grilling and squarely answer the following questions that surely, if not answered truthfully, will continue to haunt our nation. These questions should be addressed during the May 2007 elections so that in the end, at least, we can move on in unity and peace, and with moral confidence.

1. What is the truth about the "Hello Garci" tapes?

2. What happened to the fertilizer fund scam? Who benefited from this "hocus-pocus"?

3. What is the truth about the reported involvement of a Vicky Toh in smuggling activities at the South Harbor?

4. Why can't we totally stop *jueteng* in Luzon? Who is really the big boss of this illegal money-making activity?

5. Why can't we stop the killing of journalists, lawyers, activists and other people whose only fault—if it is a fault at all—is to be a critic of this present administration?

6. What is her candidates' stand on the proposed Charter change?

7. Are her candidates really in favor or against the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement?

8. Lastly, if the candidates are members of Congress or Cabinet secretaries, what were their monumental achievements that benefited the Filipino people during their incumbency/term of office?

—EFREN M. CAMORONGAN,
National Highway, New Isabela,
Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat

People, culture factors in genuine change

IN THE DEC. 17 PRAYER RALLY AT THE Quirino Grandstand, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, called for "educative and moral character change in all of us," instead of Charter change. He said there should be "reform of morals, renewal of values in all of us" so that our country would be on the road to change. I agree with him completely.

Japan, which spearheaded the so-called "flying geese" formation of economic achievers in Asia after World War II, relied on the values, attitude and behavior pattern of its people to attain its hallowed place as the second most powerful economic power in the world today. These virtues were inculcated in the mind of the Japanese people at a certain point in their education. They were also taught humility, modesty and group consciousness so that there would be harmony in life.

In contrast, we Filipinos have to start from what a foreigner called "damaged culture." As a people, we are afflicted by extreme personalism, quarrelsome behavior and attitudinal problem. True, the majority in the House of Representatives who tried to revise the Constitution through a constituent assembly has "group consciousness," but it is of the selfish and avaricious kind. The members of the majority are not truly after the common good of all Filipinos.

Speaker Jose de Venecia keeps harping that Japan and the other Asian achievers gained economic success because of their parliamentary system of government while deliberately ignoring the importance of the people and culture factors that made their success possible. He also claims that the parliamentary system will eliminate political bickering. We should be wary; he is pulling the wool over our eyes. If political dominance is conferred on the winning party under a parliamentary system, the Philippines would be in deeper trouble because most Filipino politicians are wanting in leadership, good governance and scruples. Who can prevent the reincarnation of political stalwarts proclaiming "What are we in power for?"

A Korean who has lived and worked in the Philippines has expressed his admiration for the kindness, good nature and friendliness of the Filipinos and the beauty of the country. His only regret is that "the Filipinos do not love their country." He is acutely right because if we do love our country, we should then be like Korea or Japan now. My heart bleeds when I compare my country with the two economic powerhouses.

—MARIA LUISA INSIONG,
12 President Avenue, Parañaque City

Forced to pay for LTO inefficiency

UNDER ORDINARY PROCEDURES, seven days after the purchase of a new car, the seller and the Land Transportation Office are bound to issue the registration papers and the car plate.

I bought a car from the Nissan UN Avenue-Manila outlet on Nov. 27, 2006. More than 30 days have lapsed since then—but no registration papers and car plate have come forth. None from the seller and none from the LTO. What I have been getting are conduction permits each of which are good for seven days, but which traffic policemen do not honor unless I shell out P100 to P500 for violation of "No plate, no travel policy."

Imagine, I am being forced to bribe for the inefficiency of the LTO and the Nissan outlet. Where in the world can you find a cruel government as this?

—LIGORIO GM NAVAL,
114-B Alima, Bacoor, Cavite

Top grosser is not necessarily the best

AFTER THE RECENTLY HELD AWARDing ceremonies of the 32nd Metro Manila Film Festival, Star Cinema executive producer Malou N. Santos complained about the winning entry "Enteng Kabisote 3." I know that both "Enteng Kabisote 3" and "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo" are excellent movies, but the box office performance of a film should not have been a basis for choosing the film fest's "Best Picture" award.

The film fest should not imitate TV's "talent search shows" where a contestant's score is based on text votes. There is a big difference between a talent search show and a movie in the Metro Manila Film Festival. In a talent search show, the viewers cast their text votes after they have watched and evaluated the contestants; in movies, ticket sales are counted before viewers can evaluate the movie. A movie won by popularity doesn't mean that it's the "best."

—EDWARD ESTERA,
44 Morocco St., Greenheights Subd.,
Phase 4, Nangka, Marikina City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Local law trumps international treaties

THE JAN. 8 ISSUE OF THE INQUIRER carried the contrasting views of two priests—Father Joaquin Bernas and Father Ranhilio Aquino, on l'affaire Smith.

On Dec. 20, 1999, then Justice Secretary Serafin R. Cuevas issued Department Circular No. 91 on Guidelines on Criminal Jurisdiction Relative to the Implementation of the VFA. The circular's paragraph H.4 is clear: "In case of conviction, the accused US personnel shall be subjected to disposition by the court which may order his confinement or his release on bail or recognizance, if accused personnel should appeal."

Cuevas was known to stand his ground even in the face of pressure from the Palace. His circular came out long before the case of Nicole, and should not have been lost in the din. The system should have been allowed to detain the convict in some place within its jurisdictional reach, or bail or recognizance.

Any time our judiciary is disregarded by anyone, it is a cause for alarm. We cannot have two governments ganging up on a lonely woman abandoned by her own government. In Ichong, Gonzalez, Garcia and Lantion, our Supreme Court took as ours the US doctrine exemplified by Reid, that municipal law trumps treaties. Every student of Political and Public International Law knows this. The State Department merely "suggests," not imposes, on US courts, in cases with transnational implications.

The solicitor general can't go to court only to ignore or even spit on it. Better if it had not asked the court for authority to do what Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would do anyway when no one watched.

In the 2004 bar exams, asked in Political and Public International Law was this question: "... In case there is indeed an irreconcilable conflict between a provision of the treaty and a provision of the Constitution, in a jurisdiction and legal system like ours, which should prevail: the provisions of the treaty or of the Constitution?" The issue is not to be treated dismissively. My answer would have been, whether in the Philippines and in the United States, local courts would favor local laws; but an international court or arbiter would answer otherwise.

I have the cases and the gloss from the Philippines, United States and international law praxis to validate this view, supporting the Cuevas circular.

—R.A.V. SAGUISAG,
ravslaw@mozcom.com

Sotto's Senate record speaks for itself

AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF FORMER SEN. Vicente C. Sotto III, I feel compelled to react to the column of Neal Cruz (PDI, 1/10/07) wherein he said that the former senator does not deserve a slot in the opposition senatorial ticket because of his performance as a legislator.

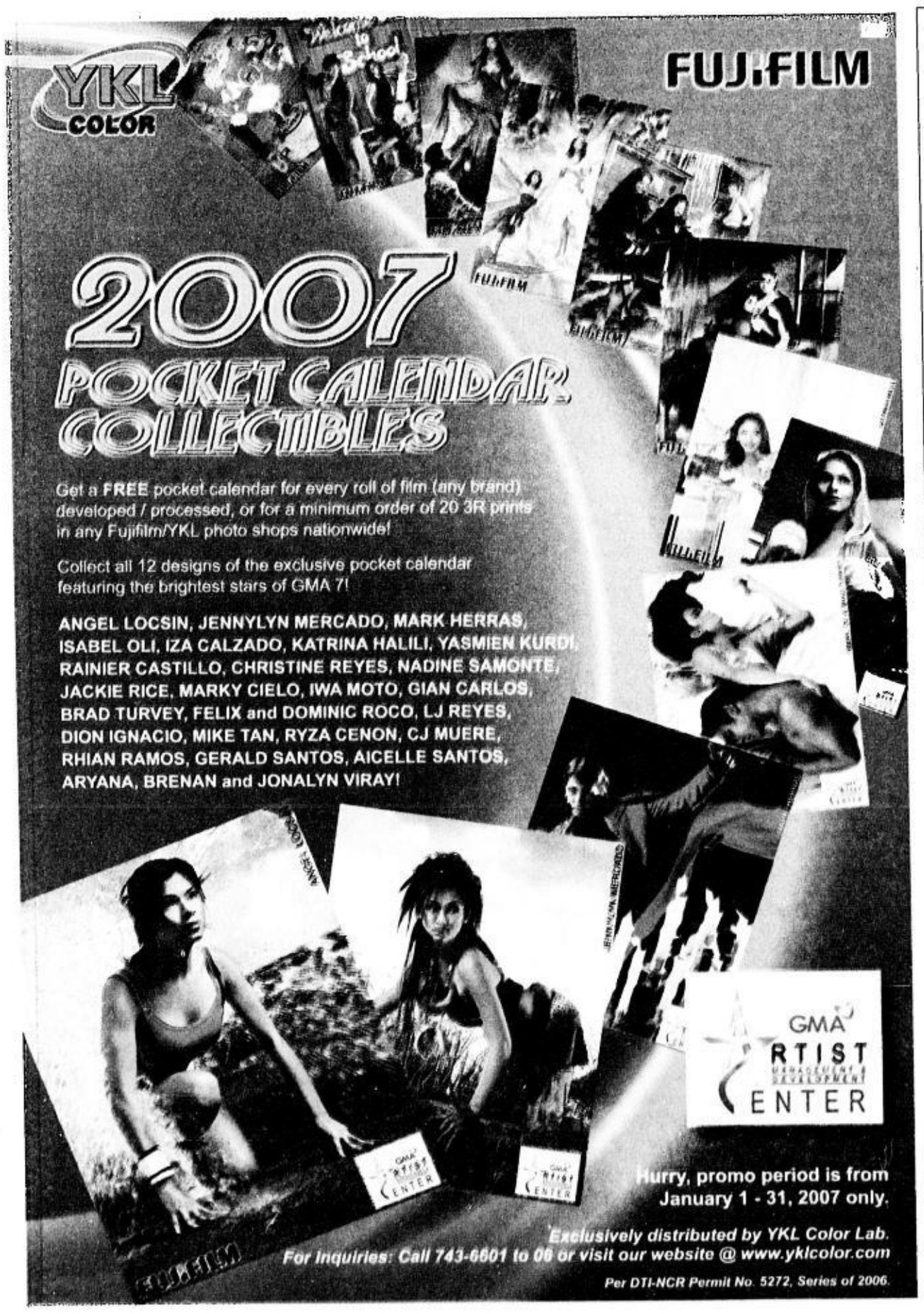
I wonder what Cruz's basis was for such an opinion. He did not mention which aspect of his work in the Senate he found disappointing. Sotto, in his two terms in the Senate, was a diligent and conscientious legislator. He took his work as committee chair (tourism, local government and public services, among others) seriously, regularly conducting public hearings, drafting committee reports, sponsoring and defending them on the Senate floor. He worked on the passage into law of numerous bills for the establishment of tourist zones in strategic places in our country, thus setting our tourism industry on its present path of growth and development. He also vigorously sponsored the bill that is now the Seat Belts Use Act, despite initial resistance from the public transport sector. He was the main author and sponsor of the law creating the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA). True, these laws may not be of the "exciting" or "controversial" kind that tends to grab the headlines and put their authors and sponsors in media focus. But let it not be said that he did nothing as a senator.

Even if one ignores the tedious committee work he did, Senate records will show that he actively participated in everyday debates on the Senate floor. From the Absentee Voting Law, the Anti-Money Laundering Act, the New Omnibus Dangerous Drugs Act, to GATT, the Epira Law, and VAT Law, he enthusiastically debated and proposed amendments to these important legislations. His voting record also shows his independence and nationalist bent. Indeed, he was one of the five who voted "No" to GATT; also, he was not in favor of the Epira Law and, in fact, he filed a bill amending it after it was enacted.

It would have been perfectly understandable if Cruz were disappointed with Sotto's performance on the basis of the latter's vote for or against certain bills and issues in the Senate. (And it would have been enlightening had Cruz mentioned them.) But it was utterly unfair for Cruz to simply imply in his column that Sotto did not do his work as a senator.

As one who has worked for and with Sotto for 12 years in the Senate, I find it unfortunate that, oftentimes, many unfairly judge Sotto solely on the basis of his being known as a "show-biz" personality. It is because of this that I sincerely ask the public to take a look at the record of his work in the Senate. One may not always agree with his stand on issues, but one certainly cannot say that he did not do his duty as a senator.

MYRA M.D. VILLARICA, chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III



'Security fees' and a letter to 'Nicole'

INQUIRER.NET VOICES

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS ARE THE so-called living heroes in our country, as we are helping the country's economy. Vice President Noli de Castro is encouraging OFWs and Filipino-Americans to send dollars to the Philippines, which clearly indicates that dollar earners are important to the country's financial stability.

In this regard, could the government provide a safe use of the airport for the dollar earners without collecting a "security fee" from us?—**CESAR CASANAS, Aramco Box 1434, Abqaiq, Saudi Arabia (from INQUIRER.net)**

* * *

I READ about all the issues swirling around you, Nicole, in the various newspapers and Internet news services, and wish we could know you in all your fortitude. I wish we could say, "We feel your pain," but we can't really. We can only imagine it.

I am tempted to say you have already made history; that at least, you got someone convicted, at least you got a trial, at least you precipitated a crisis, at least... But that is a cop-out. Filipinos have been trained to live on the "at-least" level. I hear it all the time, from exported Filipinas: at least, you have a job; at least, you're in the US; at least, you can send money home; at least, your *amo* (master) is kind; at least. It has become our prime and only virtue: survival by whatever means, under whatever conditions. I hear it often from women who work 18/7 to enable parents, siblings and various relations to continue to exist in an archipelago so wealthy it's globalization's paradise.

There are no words of comfort to make up for this travesty to you and to millions of Filipinas living lives of quiet desperation. The Philippines ranks fifth in the world in the number of women working. The first four are all Western developed nations, among them Sweden and Denmark. It is a painful irony that a country dependent on women's labor does not have the political will to defend, protect and assert one woman's right to redress of grievance.

What the US and the Philippine government have connived to teach you is imperialism's most insidious lesson: that whatever you do is an exercise in futility, because you are a citizen of a client state, because your country is a claptrap Third World country without power, because your government is a failed government, because your country is not independent, because you are part of a "colored" race, and because there are among you people who prefer survival to dignity and honor.

This is the first lesson of slavery, of course: that sense of futility and helplessness, of powerlessness; of being always in the wrong and the master always in the right. Hence, the contemptible spectacle of some Filipinas lighting candles for a convicted rapist and the equally contemptible spectacle of a priest who had lived parasitically almost his entire life on the contributions of the poor of the Philippines denying the veracity of a court trial to defend a member of the master race. What makes this race a master is the equally contemptible willingness of the country's so-called rulers to be enslaved, thereby dragging the whole nation to enslavement.

Do not accept this. Do not abide by this lesson in powerlessness. Do not internalize powerlessness. That is the first step to slavery.

The only thing we can offer, those of us who also work 18/7 scampering to correct each sliver of injustice, each instance of exploitation, each whiplash of racism in this country, are the words we live by: to the degree that you struggle against suppression, to that degree are you already free, to the degree that you resist imperialism, to that degree are you already liberated.

And if it's any comfort, know that you were done in, not by the US Marines whom you bested, but by a cabal of four-letter men and one five-letter woman masquerading as Filipinos.

So, go for it, girl, ignore the "at-leasts" and keep on truckin' to victory, if not by way of the courts, then some other way. Surrender is not an option.—**NINOTCHKA ROSCA (from INQUIRER.net)**

* * *

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Vizcaya pols tapping 'jueteng' funds

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—WTH THE holding of the May elections now almost a certainty, unscrupulous politicians in the province are rushing to build their campaign chest supposedly with the revival of "jueteng" operations here, sources who are privy to jueteng operations told the INQUIRER on Thursday.

The sources, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisal, said the local officials' looming demand for campaign funds has paved the way for the resumption of illegal bet collection activities here. Jueteng operations here had stopped for a month.

"We (in the police organization) cannot refuse (politicians') request that (the) games be continued. They are all claiming they needed the money because it's election time," a police officer said, describing how some local officials supposedly lobbied for the return of jueteng in Nueva Vizcaya.

If police officials resisted, they face the risk of getting relieved from their posts, the officer said.

Urgent needs

Such "sense of urgency" was seen on a local official, he said, who supposedly demanded P300,000 in cash from gambling financiers before they were allowed to operate here.

Incumbent officials, who have plans of running in the May elections, were panicky, the source said, as their preparations were a bit delayed due to doubts on whether or not the elections would push through, amid recent moves to change the Constitution.

"It was clear that (the official) made sure (he) made money out of this latest revival, so he asked for a cash advance," the source said.

The source said the money was handed to an aide named Mila, purportedly a government employee.

On Wednesday, INQUIRER sources confirmed the presence of jueteng bet collectors in the towns of Solano, Bayombong, Bambang, Bagabag, Dupax del Norte and Dupax del Sur.

Three winning number combinations were being released daily, the source said.

The source, however, would not say whether or not the money would be used to finance ordinary campaign expenses, or only be used to buy votes.

Extra work

But politicians have acknowledged, the source said, that they would have to work doubly hard, aware that the antijueteng advocates led by the Catholic Church here have vowed to campaign aggressively against politicians who are perceived to have been tolerating the operations of the illegal numbers game.

Catholic Bishop Ramon Villena earlier slammed local officials who have been ineffective in the government's campaign against jueteng here, and called on voters to dump them in the coming elections.

In reaction, Senior Supt. Cesar Javier, Nueva Vizcaya police director, said he has ordered chiefs of police in the province to immediately stop the reported jueteng activities in their areas.

"The latest report to me is that jueteng operations have stopped. I have given a stern warning to my officers why they allowed these 'guerrilla-type' activities to make a comeback," he said.

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Poll exec bares 100,000 'flying voters' in ARMM

COTABATO CITY—A RANKING ELECtion official said there are more than 100,000 "flying voters" in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and a quarter of that is found in his area.

It was in the ARMM area where the questionable chunk of President Macapagal-Arroyo's over one million vote margin against rival Fernando Poe Jr. emanated and became an election scandal.

Kasan Usi, acting election supervisor of the newly created province of Shariff Kabunsuan, said most of these flying voters were paid by politicians to ensure their victory during elections.

Shariff Kabunsuan was carved out of Maguindanao and became ARMM's fifth province late last year.

He said the discovery of double registrants was the main reason the Comelec was conducting a clean up of the voter's list.

"We are in the process of purging the voters list of double or multiple registrants to ensure clean and orderly elections in May," he said.

Registration

Usi said double registrants would be asked to explain why they should not be charged in court.

But while Usi had claimed the Comelec was trying to sanitize the voter's list in the province and other parts of the region, politicians called the poll body's attention to registrations being conducted even if the period for the continuing registration has already lapsed.

Tahir Lidasan, counsel for Shariff Kabunsuan Gov. Bimbo Sinsuat, said they monitored Comelec personnel in Sultan Mastura town accommodating the registration of voters on Jan. 7.

Lidasan said the Comelec's registration process—which began in March—had ended on Dec. 31.

Complaint

Usi said it was his first time to hear such a complaint.

He said he already directed the election officer of Sultan Mastura town to submit a report in reply to Lidasan's allegation.

The opposition has accused Ms Arroyo of stealing the elections in 2004 through a nationwide machinery of fraud that was allegedly led by Virgilio Garcillano, former Comelec commissioner whose phone conversations with the President were tapped.

The phone conversations became material for the opposition to seek Ms Arroyo's ouster through impeachment, but the campaign failed after Ms Arroyo was able to solidify her hold on allies at the House of Representatives.

Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

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Warehouse yields 76 tons of smuggled meat

CAPAS, TARLAC—NOT JUST 41,535 kg but 76,720 kg of smuggled pork from China were concealed in a cold storage plant in Mexico, Pampanga.

Officials from the Bureau of Customs, Department of Agriculture and the Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWMC) discovered more stocks as their personnel, escorted by policemen, hauled out the illegal shipments from the Kayabe Ice and Cold Storage Plant and delivered these in six batches for final disposal at the Kalangitan landfill here starting Wednesday.

As of 10 a.m. on Thursday, MCWMC pollution control officer Alex Laguisma counted the total volume at 76,720 kg (76.72 tons) based on the net load of the trucks that passed through the company's weigh bridge.

Ronnie Silvestre, chief of the BOC's Port of Clark that seized the contraband, and Dr. Romeo Manalili, chief of the Department of Agriculture's regulatory division, confirmed the total volume.

Explaining the discrepancy, Silvestre told the INQUIRER: "The initial volume cited during the Nov. 26 raid was based on rough estimation. There's actual counting now."

This brought the value of the contraband at nearly P12 million, he said.

The officials said no pilferage occurred during transit and disposal. Manalili said he and quarantine officials took turns overseeing the loading at the Kayabe complex while members of the Pampanga police's provincial mobile group secured the trucks during the entire transit.

The complex and the landfill are 30 km apart via the North Luzon Expressway. A freezer van and a dump truck were seen taking turns in the hauling.

A team of 15 workers has worked nonstop near a large pit since 3 p.m. on Wednesday, to complete the disposal process, Laguisma said.

The INQUIRER saw about 20 personnel from the DA, Bureau of Quarantine, National Meat Inspection Service, Environmental Management Bureau, the police's Task Force Anti-Smuggling and Commission on Audit monitoring the first five hours of the disposal. Laguisma said those agencies sent new teams to continue the watch.

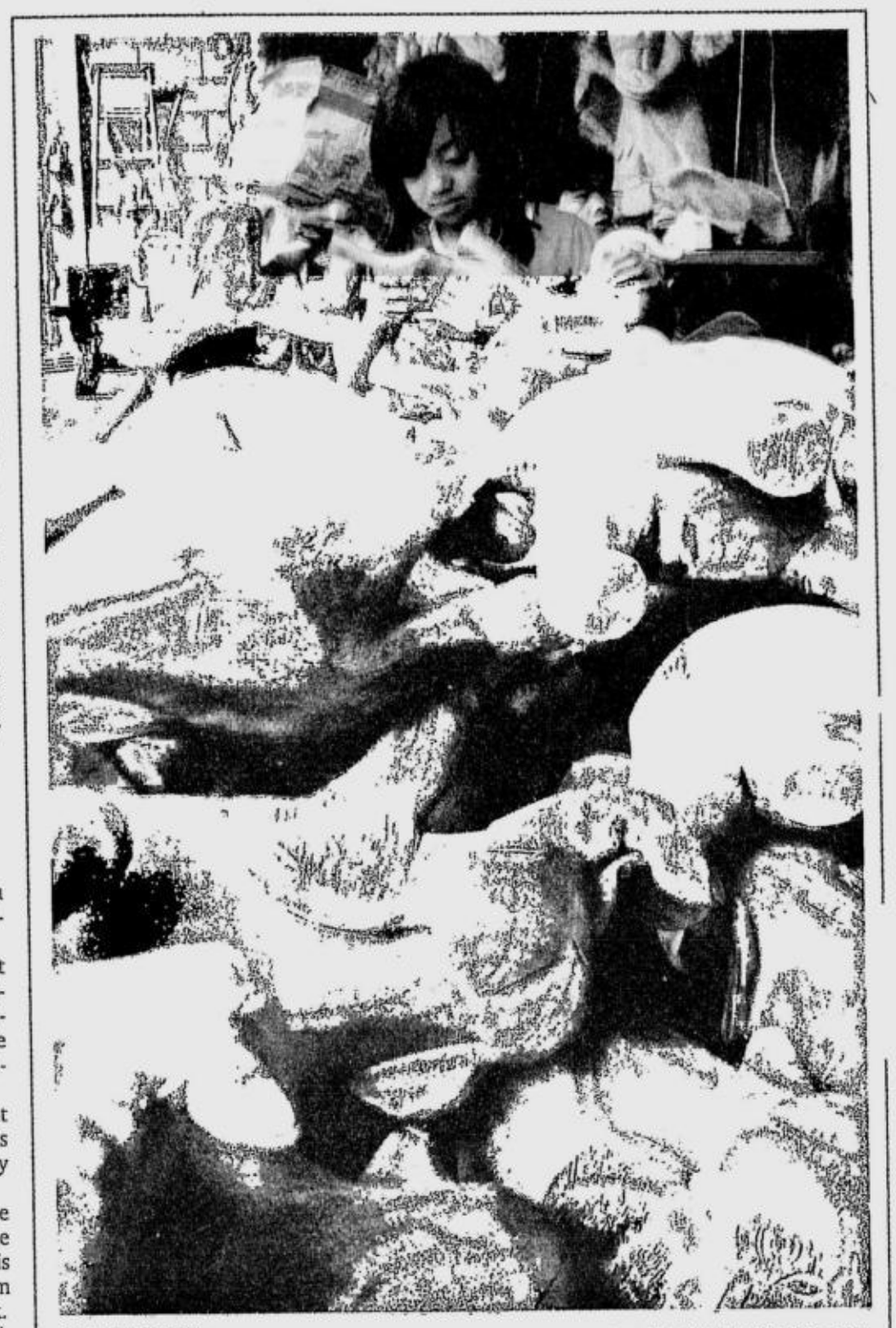
Edgar Maranan, a biotechnologist, supervised the initial phase of the disposal. For this, the German-run MCWMC used a Filipino-invented and US-patented enzyme to hasten the decaying process.

The Filipino-owned WasteWise donated the liquid enzyme made out of banana stalks.

The process entailed spraying the pit with enzyme, matting it with bagasse (fine shreds of sugarcane), throwing the enzyme-sprayed meat there and covering these with another bagasse layer. The same process was done over and over again.

Laguisma said this was the first time that MCWMC handled such a big volume of condemned meat, which the DA suspected to be infected with the foot-and-mouth disease and declared unfit for human consumption.

No owner has come forward to claim the cargo, according to Silvestre. Kayabe officials only presented copies of receipts that a certain Arnold Polintan rented the storage area where the cargo was found. Polintan had not appeared during hearings for the seizure proceedings by customs. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



LI'L HELPER EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Jenilyn Dizon, 9 years old, may be too young, but she is a necessary component in her family's woodcraft business. She spends free time polishing these sculptures, and earns P100 each day for the chore.

Laundering witness faces deportation

BAGUIO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT has started deportation proceedings against a Spanish expatriate, who is a witness to several cases filed here against another foreigner, including a complaint for money laundering.

The Bureau of Immigration detained Alejandro Goicochea for overstaying in the country for 10 years without proper documents, but his lawyers said there is a conspiracy to deport him immediately to stop several cases filed against a foreign businessman.

Goicochea told the INQUIRER that he represents an overseas investor, who accused a Baguio-based Swiss café owner of fraud for misusing capital when they built the café here.

He said the Swiss businessman was also liable for money laundering because some of the investments were allegedly wired out of the Philippines.

Lawyers of the Swiss businessman have requested the INQUIRER to withhold their client's identity while a local court hears his case, although they have denied Goicochea's accusations.

The regional trial court is hearing a case that arose between Goicochea's employer and the Swiss partner over the firm that owns the café.

Associate Prosecutor Elmer Sagsago is reviewing several criminal complaints that Goicochea and his partners also filed against the Swiss businessman.

Immigration officials first tried to detain Goicochea in December on the strength of a mission order issued by Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr., said Antonio Prieto, chief of the Baguio immigration office.

But Fernandez ordered his men to stop when Goicochea promised to pay penalty charges instead. Prieto led the arrest team last year.

Prieto said Goicochea was briefly a member of the Brent School's teaching staff here.

"I advised him to fix his papers but he never listened. He is not a criminal, and deporting him is a purely administrative function, although we realized how this will affect the pending cases here," Prieto said.

"I would want him to testify, but the court must have custody of this man, and we were never given any such document to keep him here."

He said Goicochea was given time to pay his penalty charges during the holidays, but he did not do so and this forced immigration officials from Metro Manila to detain him this week.

But Maryanne Bayang, Goicochea's lawyer, said the BI kept her client even after he had settled all his obligations. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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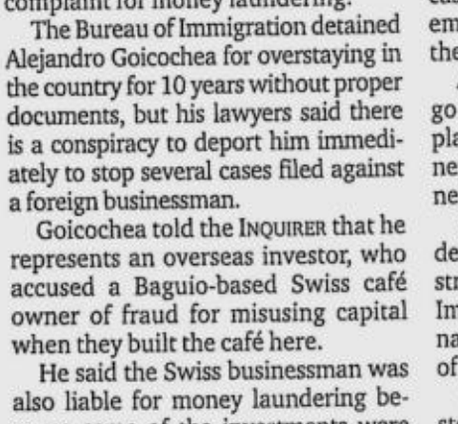

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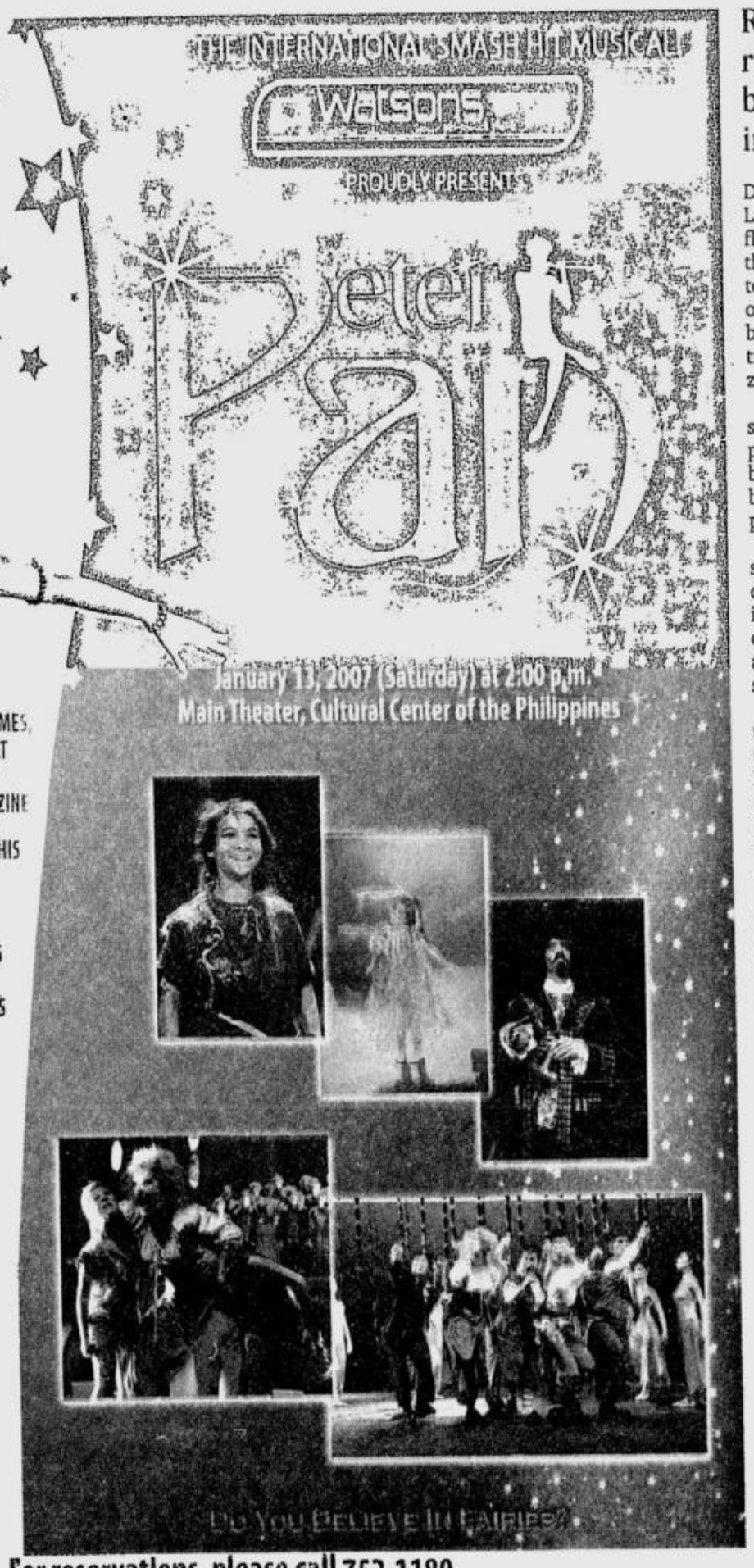

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Rains make rivers swell, bring floods in Davao Sur

DIGOS CITY—Landslides and flash floods hit at least three Davao del Sur towns following days of bad weather blamed on an intertropical convergence zone.

Provincial officials said hundreds of people have evacuated because of the rains, but there were no reported casualties.

In Malita town, swelling rivers dumped excess water into Barangay Poblacion and drove away at least 50 families to safer areas.

Dr. Paulito Montero, acting chief of the Malita District Hospital, said they also had to evacuate patients when floodwaters reached the medical facility.

"Even our septic tanks overflowed because of the floods," Montero said.

Malita Mayor Franklin Bautista said he ordered the transfer of patients to private hospitals not hit by the floods as public works personnel were trying to find ways to divert the water from the poblacion.

In Jose Abad Santos town, six houses were swept by strong currents as floodwaters inundate a village. There was no casualty.

Four villages in Don Marcelino town were submerged in floodwaters triggered by swelling rivers.

Virginia Ceniza, provincial social welfare official, said they have prepared relief assistance to the flood victims. *Eldie S. Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

ROUNDUP

Korean couple robbed

BAGUIO CITY—Robbers broke into the hotel room of a South Korean couple here on Tuesday and took away money and valuables worth P48,000. Police said Kim Bong Hee and his wife discovered that the sliding door of their room at Woods Place Inn in Barangay Military Cut Off was forcibly opened when they woke up. They said the robbers took their electronic dictionary, a pair of golf shoes, two pairs of gold earrings and a bag containing P23,000. In another incident on Tuesday, police said robbers took a videoke machine and a coin bank containing P400 from a classroom of the Crystal Cave Primary School here.

Elmer Kristian Dauigoy, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Robbery gang suspect bagged

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police arrested an alleged leader of a syndicate behind the theft of imported fighting cocks in Cavite and Laguna in a raid in Quezon City on Tuesday. Supt. Florendo Saligao, public information officer of the Calabarzon police, identified the suspect as William Alde, alleged head and financier of the Sako Gang, which has been preying on farms breeding the expensive fighting cocks. Saligao said intelligence agents bagged the suspect in a slum area at Freedom Park, Batasan Hills, Quezon City, based on a warrant issued by a regional trial court judge in Naic, Cavite, for a case of theft. Alde had earlier jumped bail after he and four other companions were arrested at a police checkpoint in Naic two years ago for possession of five stolen fighting cocks.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Fear of minor quakes allayed

COTABATO CITY—Frequent and light tremors occurring in Central Mindanao should not be a cause for alarm because these actually hinder a stronger shake, a seismic expert here said Tuesday. Rainier Amilbahar, chief of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) here, cited studies indicating that the minor quakes help release pressures underneath the ground. "It's better for a place to experience daily and minor tremors, which are usually not destructive because it helps relieve pressure buildup," he said. Amilbahar issued the statement in the wake of public concern that the frequent earthquakes felt in the region could trigger large-scale devastation similar to the 1976 quake that killed thousands of people and triggered tsunamis.

Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

3 killed in Quezon road crash

LUCENA CITY—Three people died and two others were injured when a truck loaded with cement bags collided with a trailer truck along the Quirino Highway in Tagkawayan, Quezon, on Thursday. Chief Insp. Romeo Carranza, Tagkawayan police chief, identified the victims as Benjie Carabot, 37, and his brother Sonny, 36; and Kimwuell Bonggaling, 15. Police said the victims were aboard the Manila-bound cargo truck that collided with the tanker loaded with liquefied carbon dioxide from Pasig City and bound for Naga City. Carranza said the driver of the tanker-trailer, Delmar Quingco, lost control of the vehicle on a downhill portion of the highway in Barangay Sta Cecilia. Two unidentified helpers in both vehicles were brought to a nearby hospital for treatment of injuries.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Abortionist arrested in Laguna

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A suspected abortionist was arrested in an entrapment operation inside her house in Pagsanjan town, police said. Supt. James Brillantes, chief of he Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG) of the Calabarzon police, identified the suspect as Loida Martinez, 51, of Barangay Sampaloc, Pagsanjan. Brillantes said they set up the entrapment operation Monday noon to collar the suspect after they were informed of her illegal activities. He said a team of RSOG operatives arrested the suspect in her house at noon after a police asset, who posed as a client, handed her money in exchange for her services. Recovered from the suspect's house were two human fetuses placed separately in glass bottles and several instruments believed to be used in abortion. Brillantes said they have already filed charges against the woman.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Ex-MILF officer hunted

From page A1

tion of Wednesday's bombings and she immediately ordered an intensified operation against Usman Basit and the beefing up of security in Cebu.

He said Ms Arroyo ordered the military to "go after the Abu Sayyaf without sleep and without any break."

But Esperon admitted that the bombing attacks, although anticipated in the security planning for the Asean summit, left the military red in the face.

"We are embarrassed by this. But more than anything, this should make our resolve even firmer to go against these terrorists," said Esperon.

Artist's sketch of suspect

In General Santos, Chief Supt. German Doria said an artist's sketch of a suspect, who left a backpack near the lotto outlet there, had been reproduced based on an account by an injured female witness.

In the deadliest bomb attack, at least six people were killed and 32 others wounded in the blast near the lotto outlet in General Santos. The second explosion wounded two people in Kidapawan City, and the third, made from an 81-mm mortar, killed a garbage collector and wounded six others in Cotabato City.

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said the three bomb attacks were carried out by the Abu Sayyaf.

"These (bomb) attacks have something to do with the incidents in Sulu where some Abu Sayyaf leaders were recently killed by government troops. The group wants to avenge their deaths," Jaafar said from his hideout in Maguindanao.

MILF denial

The MILF has denied claims by some police officials the MILF was responsible for the attacks. Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the rebel group would work with authorities to uncover the identities of those behind the attacks.

Classes in public elementary schools were suspended in Cotabato yesterday to give lawmen and village officials time to clear the city of concealed explosives.

In Kidapawan City, police released the identities of the six injured in Wednesday's blast: Tarcela Reyes, 27, single, a barbecue stand attendant; Kimwel Agad Sures, 25, single, a beautician; Mauricio Handugan Gatan, 52, married, jobless; Jesus Grayda, 30, married, also a barbecue stand attendant; Wilfredo Balili, 49, married, a tricycle driver, and Mark Cedeño Rivas, 14, a student, who remained in critical condition at a hospital.

Mindanao on high alert

In Manila, the military announced that it had placed the whole of Mindanao under the highest terror alert due to the possibility of more attacks.

However, the terror alert in Metro Manila and in Cebu province, the venue of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit, remained "moderate," meaning that threat groups did not have the capability to stage attacks.

"We are very, very confident that with the security placements we have there right now, nothing will happen in Cebu," said military spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro.

"Definitely, Cebu is safe," he added.

The military went on red alert nationwide on Wednesday morning, the start of the weeklong Asean summit, in anticipation of terrorist attacks.

'Extreme critical'

"We believe any threat group that intends to disrupt or cause any terror acts aimed at the Asean summit will not be able to get inside Cebu," Bacarro said.

Security forces recently adopted a four-step terror warning system—low, moderate, high and extreme. The highest is "extreme critical," which means an attack had been conducted and there was a possibility of follow-up attacks, Bacarro said.

Also yesterday, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon ordered the relief of the Cotabato city police chief, Senior Supt. Peraco Macacua, for failure to prevent Wednesday's attack. *With reports from Doria Z. Pazzibugan and Alcuin Papa and Aquiles Zonio, Charlie Señase, Allan Nawal, Rolando Pinsoy, Jeffrey Tupas and Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

HEIGHTENED SECURITY IN DAVAO CITY, TOO: An armored personnel carrier of Task Force Davao parks by the roadside in Barangay Lizada, Toril, near the boundary of Davao City as buses from General Santos City, Cotabato City and other areas are stopped for inspection before they can enter the city proper.

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

MARC Rivas, 14: One of the victims of the Kidapawan City bombing on Wednesday.

ELDIE S. AGUIRRE/INQUIRER MINDANAO)

Bush admits mistakes but plans troop buildup in Iraq

From page A1

"If we increase our support at this crucial moment and help the Iraqis break the current cycle of violence, we can hasten the day our troops begin coming home," Bush said.

But he braced Americans to expect more US casualties for now and did not specify how long the additional troops would stay.

After nearly four years of bloody combat, the speech was perhaps Bush's last credible chance to try to present a winning strategy in Iraq and persuade Americans to change their minds about the war, which has cost the lives of more than 3,000 members of the US military and many thousands of Iraqis, as well as more than $400 billion (308 billion euros).

In addition to extra US forces, Bush's plan envisions Iraq's committing 10,000 to 12,000 more troops to secure Baghdad's neighborhoods—and taking the lead in military operations.

'Why?'

Even before Bush's address, the new Democratic leaders of Congress emphasized their opposition to a buildup.

Said Nancy Pelosi, the newly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, after meeting with Bush: "This is the third time we are going down this path. Two times this has not worked. Why are they doing this now? That question remains."

There was criticism from Republicans as well. "This is a dangerously wrongheaded strategy that will drive America deeper into an unwinnable swamp at a great cost," said Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Vietnam veteran and potential Republican presidential candidate.

Senate and House Democrats are arranging votes urging Bush not to send more troops. While lacking the force of law, the measures would compel Republicans to go on record as either bucking the president or supporting an escalation.

As Bush spoke for 20 minutes from the unusual setting of the White House library, the sounds of protesters massed outside the compound's gates occasionally filtered through.

Aggressive PR campaign

The president's address is the centerpiece of an aggressive public relations campaign that also includes detailed briefings for lawmakers and a series of appearances by Bush, starting with a trip Thursday to Fort Benning in Georgia.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice heads to the Mideast a day after appearing Thursday with Defense Secretary Robert Gates at hearings on Iraq convened by the Democrats.

Usually loath to admit error, Bush said it was a mistake to have allowed American forces to be restricted by the Iraqi government, which tried to prevent US military operations against fighters controlled by the radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a powerful political ally of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Bush said al-Maliki had assured him that from now on, "political or sectarian interference will not be tolerated."

The president's approach amounts to a huge gamble on al-Maliki's willingness—and ability—to deliver on promises he has consistently failed to keep: to disband Shiite militias, pursue national reconciliation and make good on commitments for Iraqi forces to handle security operations in Baghdad.

"Our past efforts to secure Baghdad failed for two principal reasons: There were not enough Iraqi and American troops to secure neighborhoods that had been cleared of terrorists and insurgents. And there were too many restrictions on the troops we did have," Bush said.

He said US commanders had reviewed the Iraqi plan "to ensure that it addressed these mistakes."

Correcting wrong course

Senator Obama, in commenting on whether lawmakers should stop funding any increase in troop levels, said he did not think that anyone in Congress wanted to shortchange US troops already in Iraq.

"But I think that we should take a look at what mechanisms we have available to prevent the president from pursuing a wrongheaded strategy," Obama told The Associated Press, adding:

"He's commander in chief; he has a lot of discretion. But at some point our democracy is structured in such a way that when a president takes a wrong course, there is an ability to correct it."

Said Senator Clinton: "The president simply has not gotten the message sent loudly and clearly by the American people, that we desperately need a new course. The president has not offered a new direction. Instead, he will continue to take us down the wrong road, only faster."

John Edwards, the 2004 Democratic vice presidential candidate, and former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack have gone a step further, calling on Congress to block funding for a troop increase.

But Vilsack said he was wary of holding back funds to try to force the return of troops already deployed in Iraq.

"I'm not willing to suggest we have a cutting off of funds that would really put people in greater danger than they are today," Vilsack told AP.

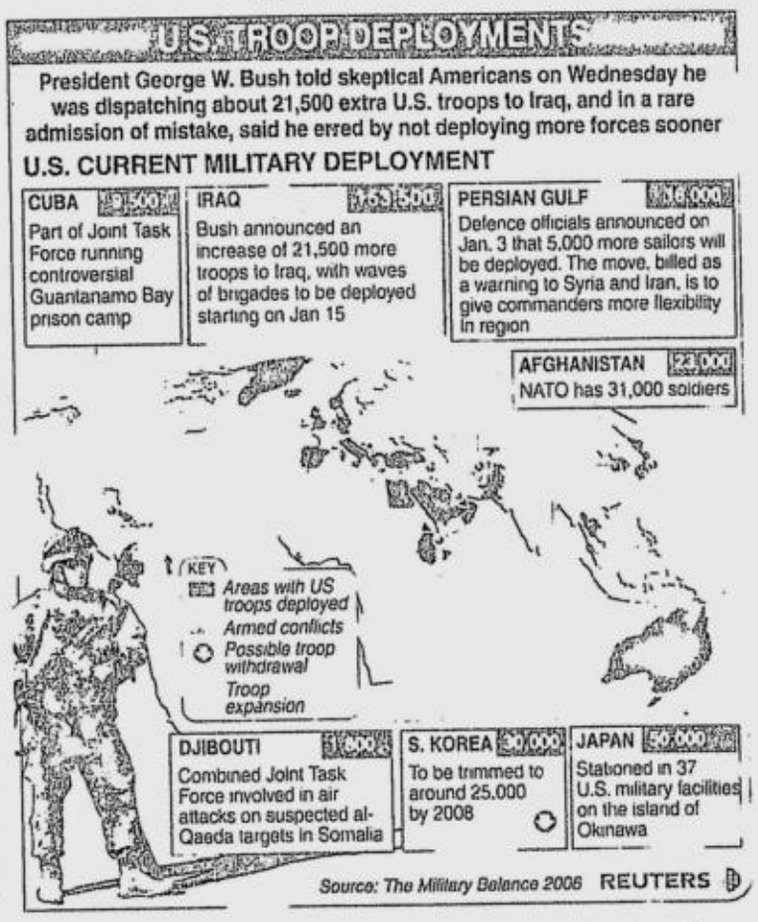
Reserving judgment

The most cautious of the Democrats has been front-runner Clinton, who has said she would not favor a proposed troop escalation in Iraq unless it was part of a broader political solution to stabilize the country and bring US forces home.

But aides said she would reserve final judgment before seeing details of Bush's plan.

Clinton, who tops every national poll of likely 2008 Democratic presidential contenders, has been criticized by many party activists for refusing to recant her 2002 vote authorizing military action in Iraq.

Other Democratic hopefuls who supported the invasion—including Edwards and Senators Joe Biden and Chris Dodd—have all called the vote a mistake. *With reports from Reuters, AP*



US allies laud announcement of American troop buildup in Iraq

TOKYO—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush's announcement of a boost in American troops in Iraq won quick support Thursday from US allies as a crucial step toward stabilizing the country and battling terrorism.

The leaders of South Korea, Australia and Japan—all longtime supporters of the US-led mission in Iraq—pledged continued political backing and material help to the beleaguered war effort.

"If America retreats in Iraq, then that has enormous consequences for the stability of the Middle East and it will also be an enormous boost to terrorism in our part of the world," Australian Prime Minister John Howard said in Sydney.

Howard, whose country has 1,300 troops in and around Iraq, called Bush's plan to boost the US presence "very clear, calm and above all, realistic."

He also praised Bush's acceptance of responsibility for the lack of success in the fight so far.

Phone calls

Bush talked to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun by phone before his announcement, officials said.

Both countries host large numbers of US troops and have contributed forces to Iraq.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said Tokyo would continue its humanitarian air support and loans to Baghdad for reconstruction.

"I strongly hope that the US efforts toward the stability in Iraq and reconstruction will proceed effectively and bring good results," Aso said in a statement. "Japan will continue to closely communicate and cooperate with the US."

Japan withdrew its 600 noncombat ground troops from southern Iraq last year, but has continued air support, and Abe has made firm support for Bush a cornerstone of his foreign policy since taking office in September.

Stability

Roh, the South Korean president, also expressed support for the new policy, his office said.

He "said he understood the background of the comprehensive US policies and expressed support for President Bush's endeavor to bring about stability and reconstruction in Iraq," his office said.

South Korea has 2,300 troops in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil to support US-led reconstruction efforts. Its current contribution of forces makes it Washington's biggest coalition partner after Britain.

Seoul plans to withdraw 1,100 troops by April, and its parliament has instructed the administration to devise a full pullout plan this year. *AP*

UN rights body backs RP vs international milk firms

From page A1

the United Nations in Geneva, to congratulate the government's effort in the face of "increasing internal pressures."

Jean Ziegler cited the revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the new Milk Code, which has been under attack from the Chamber of the Commerce of the United States of America and foreign milk companies.

Rules and Regulations

Ziegler commended the new IRR for "restricting those marketing practices promoting sales of formula milk to infants."

The IRR requires companies to put up labels warning of the possible presence of deadly bacteria in their products. This prescription was based on several international studies that showed contamination of milk products with "E. sakasakii" and "salmonella."

"I commend Your Excellency's government for adopting regulations [that] encourage it to pursue its firm stand on this issue despite increasing external pressures, with a view to ultimately protect children's right to food and improve the lives of millions of children," Ziegler wrote in a letter dated Nov. 27, 2006.

Regulating the marketing of breast milk substitutes is a step in the right direction because it complies with the government's obligation to promote infant feeding based on international standards.

A top health official, who had furnished the INQUIRER with a copy of the letter, said Ziegler's message was the UN commission's way of showing that it was closely watching the issue of breast-feeding versus milk formula products in the Philippines.

Message to Supreme Court

The official, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak on the matter, said the letter was also sending a message to the Supreme Court not to favor milk companies.

"The Commission on Human Rights obviously doesn't want to meddle with the legal technicalities of the issue," the official told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"But the message is clear—it's concerned about the fact that commercial interests are affecting the rights of people in the Philippines."

Last year, the high court reversed a previous ruling and granted the companies' petition for a temporary restraining order on the Milk Code's IRR.

In an e-mail to the INQUIRER, the advocacy group International Baby Food Action Network said the Supreme Court came up with the new decision after Thomas Donahue, president and chief executive officer of the American Chamber of Commerce, had written President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In the letter dated Aug. 11 last year, Donahue warned that the IRR would have "unintended negative consequences for investors' confidence in the predictability of business law in the Philippines."

'Subtle blackmail'

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III had described the letter as a form of "pressure" and "a subtle blackmail."

In his letter, Ziegler argued that "human milk is the ideal nourishment for infants' survival, growth and development."

The global prescription is for babies to be exclusively breast-fed at least within the first six months.

"Overwhelming evidence has shown that appropriate infant and young child feeding is the key to eliminate child malnutrition, at the same time contributing to reducing child mortality and morbidity," Ziegler wrote.

Part of Ziegler's job, as prescribed by the UN Commission on Human Rights in an April 2000 resolution, is to "identify emerging issues related to the right to food worldwide."

Also committed

In a pleading submitted to the Supreme Court, the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) said it was committed to the well-being of babies.

PHAP said the group was also committed to produce quality infant formula products that meet specific nutrient needs of healthy infants and those with special nutritional needs.

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PCGG-Ortigas 'Payanig' deal hangs

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD Government (PCGG) will continue to pursue a settlement deal with the former owners of the so-called "Payanig sa Pasig" property in the Ortigas business district despite a wide disparity in how both parties valued the prime piece of land.

In an interview, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said talks are ongoing between the agency and Ortigas & Co. for the eventual resolution of the controversy.

"We are still looking at the 65-35 percent sharing, but the ball is in their court," he said in an interview. "What we want is a reasonable price."

Abcede, who heads PCGG's asset management group, believes that the 18.5-hectare property is worth as much as P18 billion when fully developed.

Ortigas & Co., meanwhile, believes that the property is worth only P3 billion in its present "undeveloped" state—a view that jibes with an appraisal report prepared by Cuervo Appraisers Inc., which has a long history of valuing real estate in the area.

At most, the property will be worth P9 billion when fully developed—only half of what PCGG expects, according to the property appraiser.

"Any settlement should not be disadvantageous to the government," the PCGG official added.

The property was once owned by Ortigas & Co. but was sold to then President Ferdinand E. Marcos, allegedly under duress, for only P40 per square meter, representing only one-fourth of its market value then.

It was surrendered to the government by Marcos associate Jose Y. Campos in the wake of the 1986 Edsa People Power revolt as part of a settlement deal in exchange for immunity from suit.

The PCGG's own assessment of the property puts its value at up to P100,000 per square meter, although a nearby parcel of developed land was sold last year for only P70,000 per square meter.

Based on its own assessment, however, Cuervo Appraisers believes that the Payanig property should be priced at only P18,000 per square meter, especially since the structures presently standing on it—including the popular Metrowalk arcade—are mostly temporary in nature.

Cuervo's report supports its findings by pointing to the nearby 12-hectare Pimeco property along the C-5 highway, which GSIS has so far been unsuccessfully trying to sell at only P20,000 per square meter.

Abcede had earlier said that he will prioritize the disposal of big-ticket items in the PCGG's inventory for this year, including the Payanig property which is one of its largest assets.

Pending any progress in the negotiations with Ortigas & Co., he said that he will concentrate on renegotiating existing lease contracts with lessees.

One particular contract, Abcede pointed out, earns the government only P6 million in rent each year, which he described as "very low" given the level of business activity in the area.

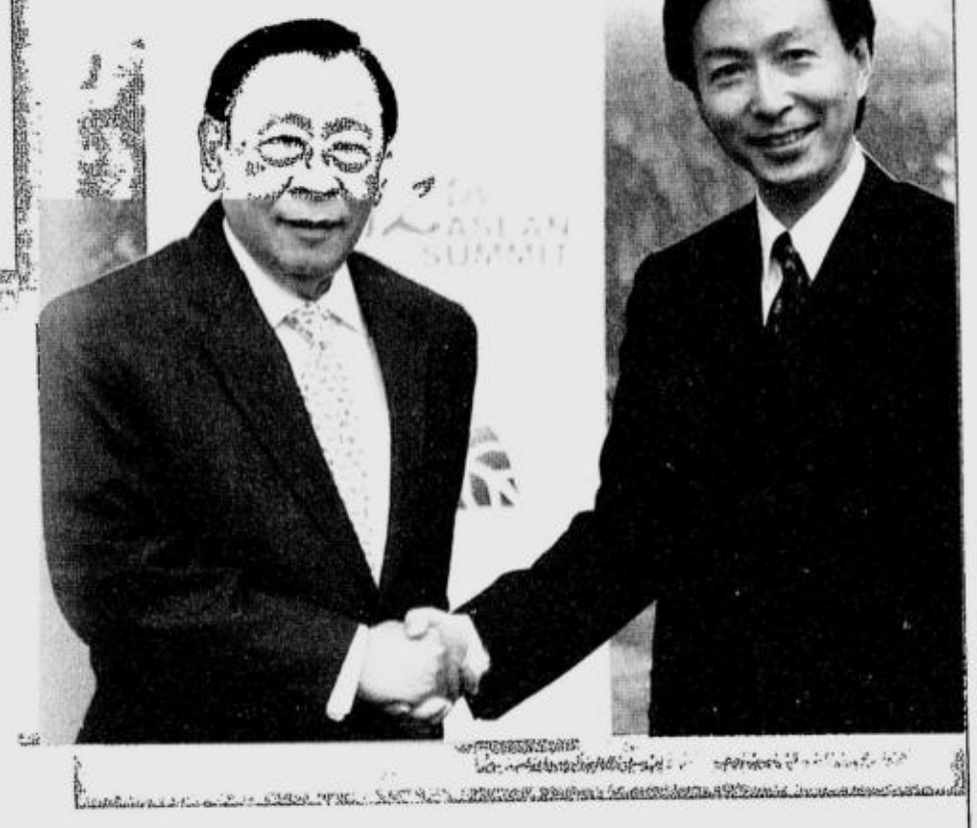
Other tenants have not been paying rent at all, he said.

"We're trying to make this [amount] at least double," the PCGG official said.

HONDA

One Caring and Sharing Community

12th ASEAN SUMMIT



Unity, cooperation & development in accord to progress.

From January 10 to 15, delegates from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, and Thailand congregate for the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit here in Cebu City, Philippines.

Themed "One Caring and Sharing Community", the summit aims to foster unity, cooperation and goodwill among Southeast Asian nations towards a stronger and more developed region.

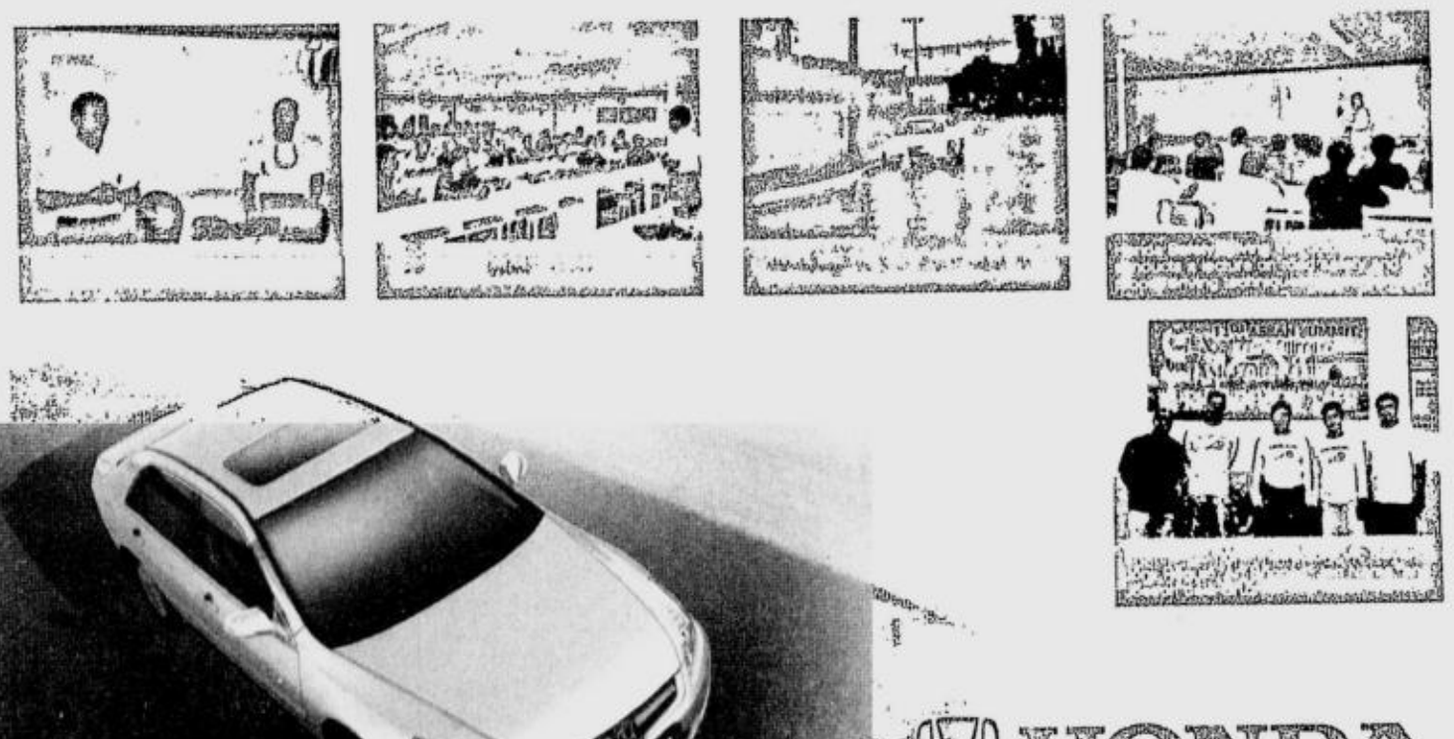
Chosen as one of the ASEAN's partners is Honda Cars Philippines, Incorporated, world-renowned makers of premiere luxury automobiles. As its contribution, Honda has pledged the use of Honda Accords as official transport to this important occasion in ASEAN history.

The fleet of Honda Accords was officially turned over to Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alberto Romulo and ASEAN National Organizing Committee Secretary General Ambassador Marciano Paynor, Jr. by the President and General Manager of Honda Cars Philippines, Inc. Takashi Sekiguchi at a simple ceremony held on October 17, 2006 at the Malacañang Palace grounds.

In addition to the use of the automobiles, Honda has trained an elite group of police officers to drive the sedans and to orient them about the salient features of the new Honda Accord. Facilitated by the Honda Safety Driving Instructors, the seminar included both classroom and hands-on training to ensure the police officers' knowledge in handling the automobiles safely.

The training was a two-day seminar on safe driving. The first leg was attended by 42 PNP personnel and was held on November 14 at the Head Office and Plant of Honda Cars Philippines, Inc. in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The second leg was held five days prior to the event on January 5 in Cebu City.

Honda Cars Philippines, Inc. welcomes the delegates of the 12th ASEAN Summit and is proud to be in accord with the ASEAN aim in furthering development, unity, and cooperation in the Southeast Asian region.



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PUMP PRIMING

Gov't advised to push sale of PLDT shares

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. JUAN PONCE ENRILE YESterday advised the government to go ahead with the sale of its stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), saying this would pump prime the economy, despite the warning of some lawmakers that this would result in huge losses to the government.

In a statement, Enrile said that if the Department of Finance had determined the selling price and undertaken the requisite bidding process, there was no reason for the government to "dilly-dally in completing the sale."

"It's not every day that the government gets a chance to pump prime the economy using non-tax revenues. We cannot afford to turn off investors as long as the sale is above-board," he said.

Enrile said that once the sale was completed, the government could expect its non-tax revenues this year to shoot up to P115 billion from the projected P90.7 billion.

Conservative target

The deal, he added, would eclipse many times over the government's conservative P500-million target from the sale of assets sequestered from the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and cronies.

The deal involves the sale of 111,415 sequestered shares in PTIC to the foreign majority owners of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

PTIC has a 13.8 stake in PLDT, which in turn is 46-percent owned by the government.

The lawmakers' criticism of the sale had prompted the government and the buyers led by Hong Kong-based First Pacific Ltd. to put off signing the purchase agreement that was originally set for Dec. 29 last year.

The PCGG had sequestered the PTIC shares that were registered in the name of Prime Holdings Inc., an alleged dummy firm set up by Marcos.

Ill-gotten wealth

The Sandiganbayan antigraft court awarded the shares to the government last December, 11 months after the Supreme Court ruled that these were part of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth and ordered them forfeited in favor of the government.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., meanwhile, has filed a resolution seeking an inquiry into the circumstances behind the sale of the "blue chip shares," saying this could result in a minimum P48-million loss to the government.

He said the shares were being sold at P2,025 per while their market price was P2,455.

The Senate, he said, should look into why the shares were being sold for much lower than their current market price and why the bidding process wasn't transparent.

Camarines Norte Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella had charged that the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was selling the shares at a "scandalous and regular price," that no bidding ever took place, and that the process may have been rigged to enable First Pacific and its Japanese partner, NTT DoCoMo, to buy the shares at a discount.

Highest bid

But PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said the selling price of the 111,415 PTIC shares was higher than the P22.5-billion bidding floor price set by an interagency technical group under the DOF.

Singapore-based Parallax Venture Fund submitted the highest bid of P25.4 billion for the government shares in PTIC. The only other bidder, Pan Asia Presidio Capital, matched the floor price.

Enrile said PTIC's only other shareholder, First Pacific, had announced its intention to match the highest bid for the shares.

"The soonest the government is able to put to good use the proceeds from this sale, the better. The issues being raised about the ownership structure of the company that submitted the highest bid are, in fact, moot because of First Pacific's intention to exercise its right to buy the shares," he said.

The senator said he believed the P24.9-billion floor price for the sale of the shares—"taking into consideration the normal practice of block sales fetching discounts, as well as the difficulty of selling non-listed shares like those of PTIC"—was realistic.

He added that there should be a presumption of regularity in the valuation and bidding process by the DOF since the "basis for pricing was fully established and the bidding process was fully transparent."

A plus METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Murder cancels planned wedding

Bride-to-be found buried near home

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Emman Cena

WEDDING BELLS SHOULD HAVE RUNG TWO weeks ago for Enrico Lacaba, 34, and Arlene Suelo, 39, live-in partners for eight years in Marikina City .

But a week before the scheduled wedding, Lacaba, with three companions, allegedly stabbed and beat to death his bride-to-be in front of their three daughters.

The suspects allegedly buried Suelo's body 10 meters away from the couple's shanty.

But some of the suspects, apparently bothered by their conscience, started to talk. A concerned citizen who heard the story told police about the alleged crime.

"We were scheduled to get married on Dec. 28," Lacaba told the police following his arrest the other afternoon with an alleged accomplice, 19-year-old Cayetano Navidad.

"I regret what I did. I loved her very much," Lacaba told the INQUIRER in Filipino. But he said he was unable to contain his anger when she started badmouthing him in front of his friends. Police arrested suspect Eric Garcia, 32, in Silang, Cavite early yesterday. Another suspect, Jerry Moreno, 26, remains at large.

Marikina City police chief Supt. Sotero Ramos said the arrested suspects admitted killing Suelo about 8 p.m. on Dec. 20 inside the shanty she shared with Lacaba in the middle of an 800-square meter compound in La Colina Subdivision, Barangay Fortune.

Ramos said, the suspects, currently detained at the Marikina City jail, would be charged with murder.

Lacaba said, "She (Suelo) always picked a fight with me. She even beat up our three children. I have had enough I guess." He added he never physically hurt Suelo, who was bigger than him.

But that evening, while Lacaba and his alleged accomplices were about to start a drinking session, Suelo allegedly started quarreling with Lacaba again.

Ramos, quoting the suspects, said Navidad suddenly stabbed Suelo in the belly using a kitchen knife. Garcia, Lacaba's cousin, also allegedly stabbed Suelo in the back using an ice pick.

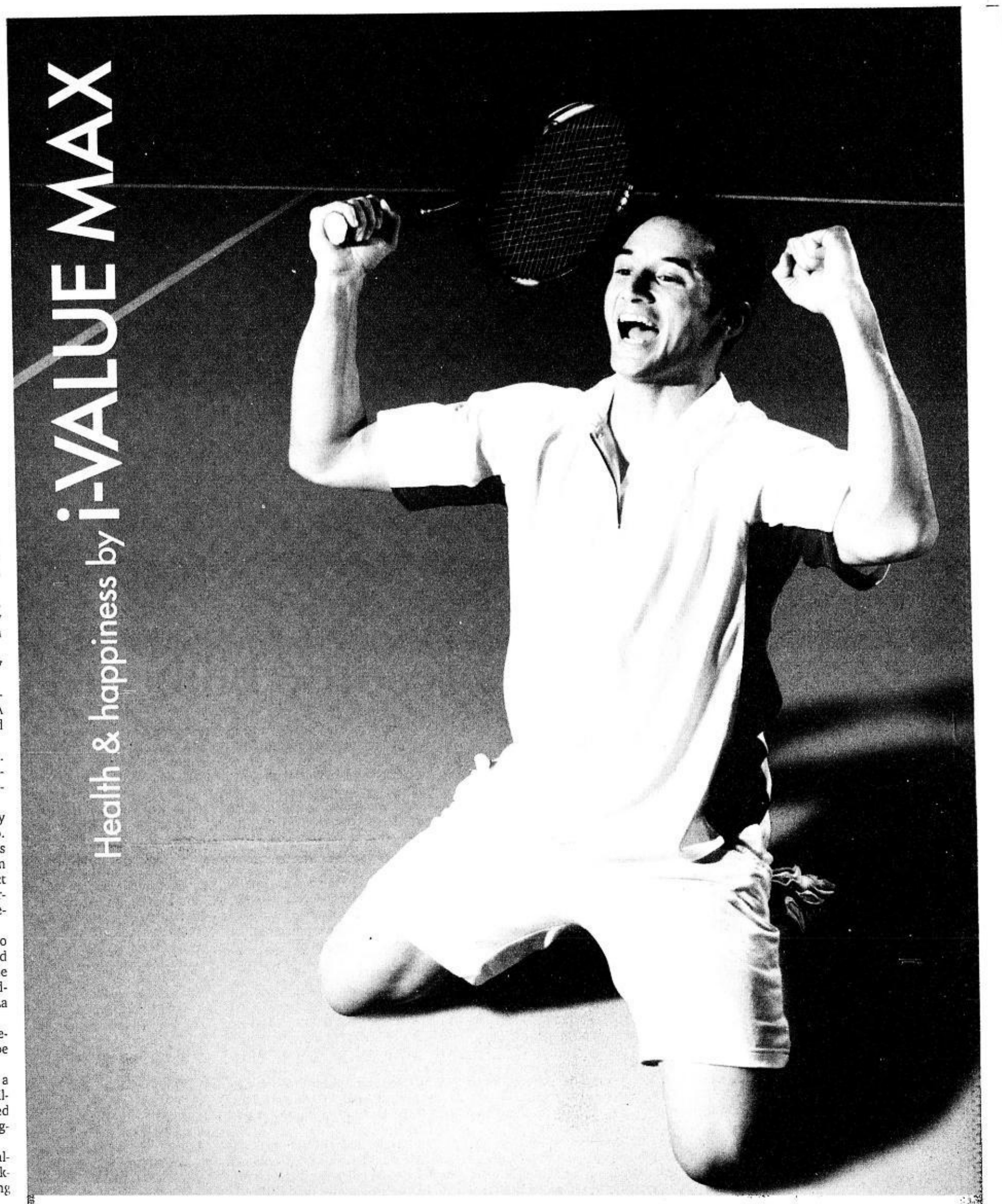
A bleeding Suelo turned to her common-law husband for help. But Lacaba allegedly got a piece of wood and hit her on the face.

Their three daughters, aged 6, 4 and 2, witnessed the crime.

Moreno tried to stop his friends from attacking the victim, but his pleas went unheeded, Ramos said, quoting the statements of the three suspects.

Lacaba said Garcia and Navidad helped him "because they saw that I was no match for her."

MURDER/ A20



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Baclaran to put up 'street mall' for vendors

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PARAÑAQUE CITY GOVernment is rushing the development of a portion of Baclaran into a promenade in the hope it will put an end to the violent clashes between illegal vendors and demolition teams of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

The project would transform the entire Redemptorist Road, which runs from Taft Avenue to Roxas Boulevard, into a covered walk with permanent stalls.

"We are going to turn the street into a mall so vendors would have a permanent source of livelihood," Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. told the INQUIRER the other day.

The multi-million "Walking Mall" should have been finished last year but the original contractor withdrew from the project causing a delay, Bernabe said.

He added that they were now talking to a Malaysian-based contractor so work on the project can proceed.

Bernabe said the vendors, mostly residents of a Muslim neighborhood off Roxas Boulevard, can expect the mall to be finished by the middle of the year.

"We hope to get the bidding done before the election ban takes effect. Otherwise, we won't be able to start the construction," the mayor said.

Bernabe pointed out that, with the mall, there would be no need for the MMDA to undertake clearing operations that often turned violent.

In 2003, four members of a MMDA team died during a demolition job in the area.

Two persons, one of them a minor, were killed and two others were hurt last Friday when the MMDA tore down the wooden footbridge connecting the vendors' homes to Roxas Boulevard.

Residents threw bottles at members of the MMDA teams, some of whom allegedly shot at the crowd.

Jamal Ampuan, 13, died hours after the incident from a gunshot wound.

Alex Gapar Ampatua, a 30-year-old vendor, succumbed on Monday afternoon.

City police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles said they filed on Saturday charges of homicide and frustrated homicide against two Army reservists assigned to the MMDA clearing team.

He identified them as Dennis Abayon and Edgardo Mendoza, who were caught with .45-caliber pistols near the Baclaran Church hours after the incident. "But they posted bail early this week," Estilles told the INQUIRER.

Police to use video in new anticrime program

By Tarra Quismundo

SMILE, YOU MAY BE ON CANDID CAMERA IF you are in a Makati City bus terminal or stop.

Police officers with video cameras began patrolling bus terminals and crowded bus stops around Makati yesterday as part of the local police's latest crime prevention program.

Tagged "Oplan Video Sita," the Makati Police Station's new project aims to create for the police an archive of possible robbery suspects through footage taken of commuters waiting for buses, said Makati police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz.

"This is meant to catch robbers posing as passengers. What we'll do is we'll take video footage of passengers lining up for buses so that we'll have a video file of passengers. If that bus gets robbed later, at least we have a photo file of passengers who boarded that bus," Cruz told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Uniformed police officers wielding cameras would be deployed everyday in the busy bus terminal at Park Square in Ayala Center where hundreds, if not thousands, of passengers line up daily to travel to the nearby provinces of Cavite and Laguna.

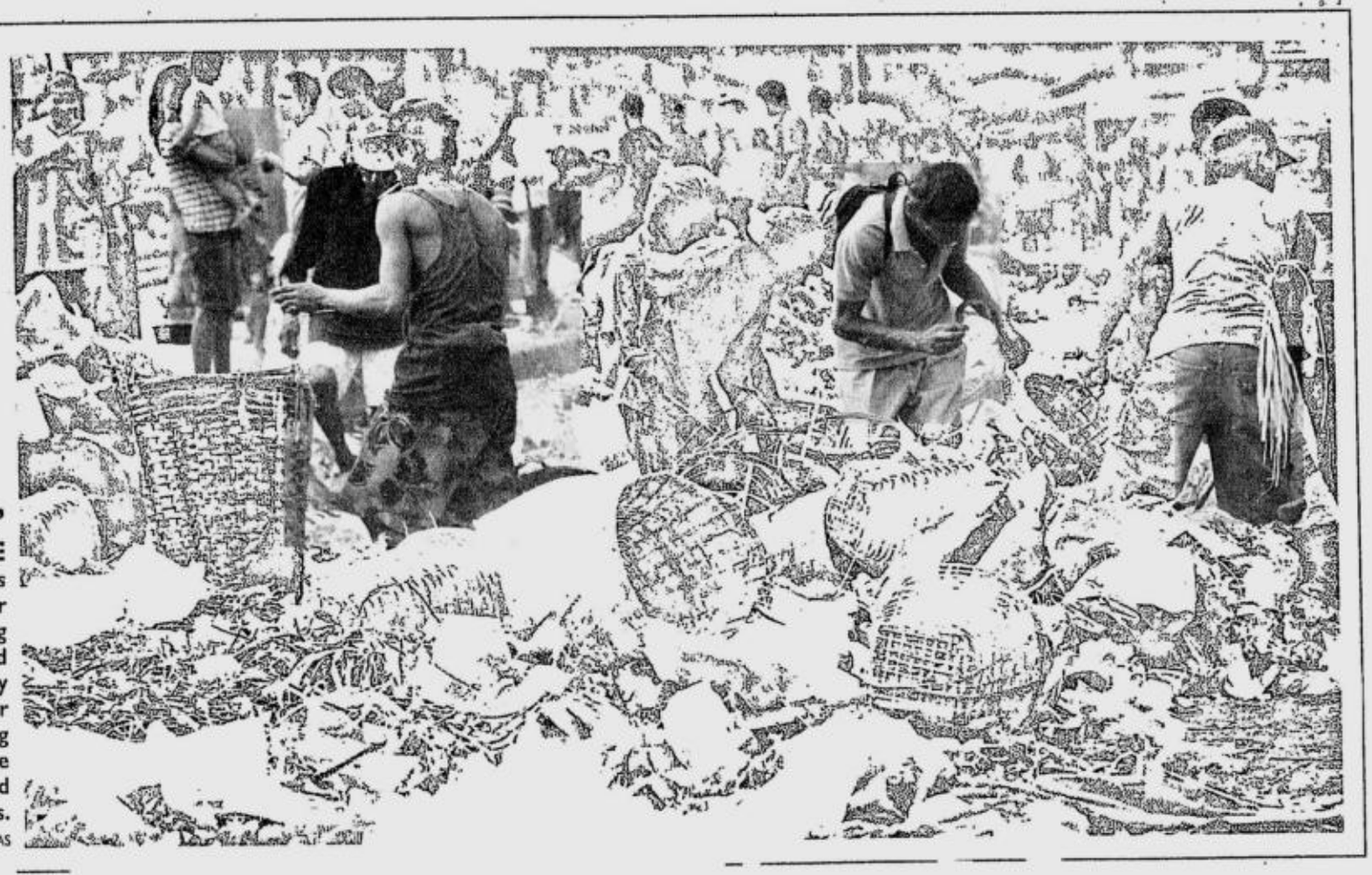
The video scheme would also be conducted in busy bus stops on Edsa, the Makati-Pasay boundary and Guadalupe; and on Ayala and Gil Puyat Avenues, Cruz said.

At the same time, police will distribute their video "Kriminal Modus Operandi" containing valuable tips on how the public can avoid becoming victims of crimes, like bus heists.

"The video filming will be done at random. This is SPD-wide (meaning it will be implemented in the whole Southern Police District), but we will begin in Makati. We will file the video and if, after three days, nothing happens to that bus, then we could record over the video," said Cruz.

Asked how the police would handle possible adverse public reaction, Cruz said: "We will tell them that it's for their own safety. And it will not be a full close-up of their faces. We will just pan the camera around the bus stop or terminal area."

The police would also require bus companies to use video cameras themselves later.



SCAVENGERS' PARADISE Divisoria Market is a fertile ground for scavengers looking for discarded vegetables they can bring home or stuff for recycling or for sale to the neighborhood junkyards. ERIK ARAZAS

DPWH to resume billboard campaign

By Leila B. Salaverria and Armand N. Nocum

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC Works and Highways will soon resume its drive against outdoor advertisements that violate the National Building Code and other regulations and are threats to public safety.

Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. will lead the campaign, which was suspended for a month so as not to add to the traffic problem during the Christmas season. The drive was supposed to resume today but Ebdane was reported to be on his way to Cebu for the Asean Summit.

Director Emmanuel Cuntapay of the National Building Code Development Office said the DPWH would focus on billboards erected on private property.

First stop

He said the new drive would begin on Edsa, one of Metro Manila's busiest thoroughfares and home to numerous giant billboards.

The DPWH is also expected to dismantle a billboard at the Social Security System compound, corner East Avenue and Edsa, after the Court of Appeals refused to issue an injunction to prevent the department from removing the structure.

In a decision penned by Associate Justice Mariflor P. Castillo, the CA threw out the petition of DDBS Advertising Unlimited, owner of the parcel of land in East Avenue where the billboards were located, for an injunction against the DPWH.

Defective

"A recent inspection conducted by respondents (the DPWH's Structural Division or "Task Force Billboard,") showed that the said billboards have been found to be defective and will cause potential danger to the public," the CA said.

It added, "The subject signboard is considered extremely hazardous, and an imminent threat to public safety, hence, it is recommended that this structure should be immediately dismantled as a nuisance, as provided for by law."

The CA also said this "cast a doubt on whether a clear legal right does exist in favor of DDBS so as to entitle it to a writ of injunction. Until we rule otherwise, such right is no longer existing."

Under question

The government would have demolished the structures under question in October, but DDBS was able to secure a temporary restraining order (TRO) on Nov. 2, which was valid until Jan. 1.

The CA said it issued the restraining order against the DPWH on the ground that DDBS had a legal right to protect the billboards.

DDBS Advertising Unlimited, the billboard's owner, had also obtained earlier a temporary restraining order from a Quezon City regional trial court to prevent the tearing down of its advertisement.

DDBS said its billboard was covered by proper permits.

Proof

However, Ebdane was able to submit to the CA proof that DDBS did not have a permit for putting up the billboards.

The appellate court noted the Oct. 16 certification issued by the Office of the City Engineer of Quezon City stating that no building permit and certificate of use and occupancy was issued for DDBS' billboards.

The disputed billboards are located at the East Ave.-Epifanio de Los Santos Ave. (Edsa) intersection, the Social Security System compound and the DPWH compound.

The CA ruling gave the DPWH the green light to demolish the billboards.

Apart from DDBS, several other companies also obtained temporary restraining orders earlier.

Trackworks Rail Transit Advertising, Vending and Promotion Inc. got a TRO from a Quezon City court to stop the dismantling of its advertisements at the MRT route and stations, the DPWH said earlier .

Jemah Ads Inc. also obtained a TRO to stop the dismantling of its electronic billboard in Makati City.

Advertising Ventures Corp. also got a TRO from a Makati court to prevent the DPWH from removing its advertisements on Meralco posts.

Aftermath

The campaign against illegal and hazardous billboards began shortly after Typhoon "Milenyo" toppled billboards in Metro Manila in late September, resulting in the death of one person.

President Macapagal-Arroyo subsequently directed the DPWH to inspect and dismantle billboards that violated regulations and ordinances, and threatened public safety.

Before Milenyo hit the country, the DPWH already drafted a circular banning billboards along national highways.

The draft circular provides that no billboard should be located within a 100-meter radius from the center of national roads and transmission lines.

Cuntapay said the DPWH was studying and preparing new rules on billboards for inclusion in the implementing rules and regulations of the National Building Code.

DID YOU KNOW

TANDANG Sora Avenue in Quezon City was named after Melchora "Tandang Sora" Aquino, Mother of the Philippine Revolution, who was born on Jan. 6, 1812 in Caloocan. She helped Katipuneros during the period of Spanish rule by giving them food and by nursing the sick and wounded. For these acts, she was imprisoned by the Spaniards. Aquino was deported to Guam after refusing to reveal the whereabouts of Katipunan leader Andres Bonifacio. She was repatriated by the Americans after they occupied the Philippines. Tandang Sora died in February 1919 in Manila.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

New CIDG-QC head

A NEW chief has just moved in at the Criminal Investigation Detection Group-Quezon City. Effective Monday, Chief Inspector Jacinto Malinao Jr. will head the Quezon City unit of CIDG, a special police division handling sensitive cases. He replaced Supt. Alfredo Orbeta, who was assigned to a new post at the National Capitol Region-CIDG administrative branch. No reason was given for Orbeta's reassignment, though two desk officers at the NCR-CIDG confirmed the change of positions. Malinao said he used to be with the NCR-CIDG. CIDG-Quezon City is based in the Quezon City Police District headquarters at Camp Karingal in Sikatuna Village. But the unit is technically not a part of the QCPD. Its officers report directly to the NCR-CIDG command, said QCPD director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula.

DJ Yap

Brothers in trouble

WHAT looked like a harmless drinking spree between friends turned nasty when two brothers stabbed a man enjoying a few drinks before dawn yesterday in Brgy CAA, Las Piñas City. The assault happened so fast that Jessie Cañete's shocked friends were unable to pull him away from Armando and Nestor Paguio, also of the same barangay. PO3 Roland Abraham of the Las Piñas Criminal Investigation Division said the brothers ganged up on Cañete while he was drinking at his cousin's house. Initial investigation showed that Cañete dropped by his cousin's house to join a drinking session at about 3:20 a.m. on Thursday. Armando and Cañete had a brief exchange of words later, followed by a tussle. Armando then left in a huff, only to return later with Nestor. Armando proceeded to stab Cañete in the chest with a fan knife and fled with his brother after the incident. Friends rushed the bleeding victim to the Las Piñas District Hospital, but Cañete was declared dead on arrival because of the multiple stab wounds and blows he sustained from the attack. Police are now looking for the Paguio brothers.

Julie M. Aurelio

Car theft suspect killed

QUEZON City policemen yesterday shot dead a suspected car thief at Quirino Highway after a brief chase. Case investigator PO1 Jesus Cantillon said police were alerted about a Mitsubishi L300 van with license plate XFE 462 that was the subject of a carjacking operation in La Loma, Quezon City. Sensing that the police were hot on their trail, the two suspects sped off as responding police chased them from A. Bonifacio Avenue to Quirino Highway, according to a spot report. Reinforcements from police stations 1 and 2 also aided in the chase. Police were able to corner the two who tried to escape on foot at the Floresco compound. Cantillon said police shot one of the suspects in the head. His companion, however, escaped. The suspect was declared dead on arrival at the Quezon City General Hospital. Police have yet to identify the suspect, as well as the owner of the van.

Miko L. Morelos

Murder cancels planned wedding

From page A19

Police found the victim's body Wednesday afternoon buried four feet under the ground in the same compound where their love story began.

Suelo was a helper at the house of the Pedraza family, owner of the compound. When the family appointed Lacaba as caretaker of the property, he brought Suelo with him and they raised a family.

Lacaba said he and the victim always fought. "But I could not leave her. I loved her so much."

But Lacaba said, during their relationship, the victim constantly nagged him. The five-foot Lacaba claimed he was also battered by Suelo who was bigger than him.

Police investigators said Suelo was known in the neighborhood as "Amazona," because of her build.

The police said clothes, photographs and other personal belongings of the victim were burned by Lacaba shortly after the incident.

'Erap has final say in San Juan mayoral race'

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IN THE END, JAILED FORMER PRESIdent Estrada will still call the shots.

"The President (Estrada) will have the final say," San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito told the INQUIRER yesterday when sought for comment on a plan to field his mother Guia Gomez as the next mayoral bet of the small town the Estrada family has ruled for almost several decades.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada is said to be grooming his wife Precy to run as town mayor. Jinggoy is Estrada's son with Sen. Loi Estrada.

With Loi's term about to expire, JV is reportedly interested in seeking a Senate seat. But Loi is said to be still considering seeking reelection.

JV had earlier said his father had already expressed his intention to back up his senatorial bid.

But while he is considering running as senator, JV quickly said he could also just seek reelection.

He is finishing his second term as San Juan mayor.

The former president began his political career when he won and served as San Juan mayor from 1969 to 1986.

Following the ouster of former President Marcos, then President Aquino appointed Baby San Pascual as officer in charge of the town in 1986.

Estrada was already in the Senate when Jinggoy ran and won as vice mayor. Adolfo Sto. Domingo served as mayor from 1988 to 1992.

Jinggoy ran and won as mayor in 1992 and went on to complete three consecutive terms before running and winning as senator in 2001.

His half-brother JV replaced Jinggoy in 2001 and won again in the 2004 election.

The last polls highlighted the publicly known rift between the two brothers as JV formed his own line up from vice mayor to councilors.

Jinggoy also fielded his own line up, with candidates in almost all local posts, except for mayor.

Top al-Qaida man reported killed in US air strike

AN F/A-18E Super Hornet launches from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, Jan. 10. The US military said Tuesday it had sent the carrier to join three other US warships conducting antiterror operations off the Somali coast. AP

MOGADISHU, SOMALIA—A SENIOR al-Qaida suspect wanted for bombing US embassies in East Africa has been killed, a Somali official said, as witnesses said US forces launched a third day of air strikes.

Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister said Wednesday that American troops were needed on the ground to root extremists from his troubled country, and he expected the troops soon.

The death of al-Qaida suspect Fazul Abdullah Mohammed was detailed in an American intelligence report passed on to the Somali authorities. Mohammed, one of the FBI's most wanted terrorists who has evaded capture for eight years, was allegedly harbored by a Somali Islamic movement that had challenged this country's Ethiopian-backed government for power.

"I have received a report from the American side chronicling the targets and list of damage," Abdirizak Hassan, the Somali president's chief of staff, said. "One of the items they were claiming was that Fazul Abdullah Mohammed is dead."

At UN headquarters in New York, US deputy ambassador Jackie Sanders said she informed the UN Security Council on Wednesday "that we could confirm that there was a strike against a high-level terrorist leader, al-Qaida leader."

"Al-Qaida, as you know, blew up two of our embassies in 1998. We have a long memory when it comes to terrorists killing innocent Americans, and in this case Africans, and in this case we were going after those folks who were involved," Sanders said.

Mohammed, 32, joined al-Qaida in Afghanistan and trained there with Osama bin Laden, the terror network's leader, according to the transcript of an FBI interrogation of a known associate. He has a $5-million price on his head for allegedly planning the 1998 attacks on the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 225 people.

He is also suspected of planning the car bombing of a beach resort in Kenya and the near simultaneous attempt to shoot down an Israeli airliner in 2002. Ten Kenyans and three Israelis were killed in the blast at the hotel. The missiles missed the airliner.

Police at the Kenyan coastal border town of Kiunga on Monday arrested a wife of Mohammed, with her three children, according to an internal police report seen.

Leaders of Somalia's Islamic movement have vowed from their hideouts to launch an Iraq-style guerrilla war, and al-Qaida deputy chief has called on militants to carry out suicide attacks on Ethiopian troops.

Somalia has not had an effective central government since clan-based warlords toppled dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991 and then turned on each other. The interim government was established in 2004. AP

Bird flu resurgent across Asia

JAKARTA, INDONESIA—BIRD FLU HAS killed again in Indonesia and is picking up speed elsewhere in Asia, with fresh outbreaks in Vietnam and a new human case reported in China.

The H5N1 virus killed a 14-year-old boy on the outskirts of Jakarta, the country's first fatality in six weeks.

Indonesia is the world's hardest-hit country, with 58 bird flu deaths. A 37-year-old woman hospitalized earlier this week with the virus remains in critical condition, Aditama said.

The death, along with reports of new poultry outbreaks and human cases, comes during the winter months when bird flu typically flares.

China on Wednesday also announced that a 37-year-old farmer was infected last month but has fully recovered from the virus and was released from the hospital over the weekend, the China News Service and Xinhua News Agency reported, citing the Health Ministry. It was the first human case reported in China since July.

The man raised backyard poultry, but Chinese experts were still trying to determine how he got infected, said Joanna Brent, a World Health Organization spokesperson in Beijing.

Experts fear the virus, which remains hard for people to catch, will evolve into a form that spreads easily among people, potentially sparking a pandemic. So far, most human cases have been traced to contact with infected birds.

Meanwhile, Vietnam on Wednesday reported that the virus has spread to a fourth southern province since last month as officials brace for the worst prior to next month's Lunar New Year festivities when people and poultry are on the move.

Kien Giang province became the latest area struck by the bird flu virus, with nearly 2,000 ducks killed or slaughtered over the weekend, said Dinh Cong Than, director of the provincial department of animal health.

Last month, bird flu outbreaks were reported in neighboring Ca Mau, Bac Lieu and Hau Giang provinces—the country's first reported outbreaks in a year, killing or forcing the slaughter of some 30,000 birds. AP

Australia birds mysteriously fall from sky

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES ARE investigating the mysterious deaths of hundreds of birds that dropped from the sky over a small coastal town in a period of a few weeks.

Residents of Esperance in Western Australia found their suburban properties littered with the bodies of honeyeaters, wattle birds and yellow-throated miners, local media reported this week.

Michelle Crisp told the Australian newspaper she and her neighbor had counted 80 dead birds in one day. "It was like a moonscape, just horrible," she said.

"The loss of birds has been so noticeable people are saying 'We've just got no birds in the garden at all,' or 'We're getting no dawn chorus'," conservationist Graeme Hamilton said Thursday.

Hamilton, chief executive of the country's main bird conservation group, Birds Australia, said he had never heard of bird deaths on the scale seen in Esperance.

"Certainly several hundred birds have been reported dead to the department of the environment but it may be up to several thousand as not every dead bird would have been reported." He said the only possible explanations would be a sudden epidemic of disease or a natural or man-made toxic substance.

"No other animal groups seem to be affected, we're not turning up dead cats and dogs and marsupials," he said. "It's a mystery."

The states' department of food and agriculture has conducted autopsies on several birds.

"It doesn't appear to be an infectious cause. Certainly, one thing that is being considered is a toxin," said acting chief veterinary officer Fiona Sunderman.

Esperance, surrounded by lakes, offshore islands and national parks, was renowned for its bird life. AFP

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FILINVEST
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Parts of Indonesia plane found at sea

MAKASSAR, INDONESIA—PIECES OF AN INdonesian airliner with 102 people on board have been found in the ocean off Sulawesi island, officials said on Thursday, after a painstaking 10-day search for the plane from jungles to stormy seas.

Parts including a tail stabilizer and flight attendant seats were confirmed or reported found in the water and on beaches near the town of Pare Pare on the western Sulawesi coast. A woman's body was also recovered in the vicinity.

Relatives expressed relief they finally had firm news on the plane, even if it was not good, after a long wait and an erroneous report that it had crashed in the jungle and some people had survived.

The ill-fated Adam Air Boeing 737-400 was heading from Surabaya in Central Java to Manado in northern Sulawesi when it vanished in bad weather on Jan. 1.

"This morning I announced that there has been a finding of a part of Adam Air. What was found was the right tail's stabilizer number 65C25746-76. This thing was found by a fisherman in Pare Pare," said Eddy Suyanto, who has been coordinating search efforts from an air base in the South Sulawesi capital, Makassar.

Separately, a police official said the body of a woman, estimated to be in her 30s, had been recovered, although neither her identity nor whether she was a passenger on the Adam Air plane had been confirmed.

"She had short black hair. She wore green attire, long brown trousers. She had typical dark Asian skin," Simon Benteng said by telephone from Pare Pare, about 100 km north of Makassar.

Two flight attendant seats were also found on a beach on Thursday in the same general area, search and rescue official Immal Yuhani told Reuters. Elshinta news radio said fishermen had discovered a life vest wrapper 10 km from the stabilizer's location.

Two truckloads of soldiers were deployed to Pare Pare to help comb the beaches.

Pare Pare is about 150 km south of Mamuju in west Sulawesi, which had been the hunt's main focus since Monday when Indonesian ships detected large metal objects on the sea bed.

In a Makassar hotel where relatives of the Adam Air passengers have been staying, Rosmala Dewi, the mother of a flight attendant on the plane, told reporters: "I feel a bit relieved if it is true that the search team has found that piece. We have waited so long, and we have received so many confusing reports. We do not know whether to go home or stay here forever."

"I cannot hide the fact relatives feel happy with this news, we have waited anxiously for too long," said Fanny Duran, 46, whose sister, brother-in-law and their child were on the plane.

"As human beings we have lost hope after 10 days but if God wants a miracle to happen it will happen, including the existence of survivors," he said. *Reuters*

EU unveils vast plan to diversify energy sources

BRUSSELS—THE EUROPEAN Commission unveiled a vast plan Wednesday to diversify EU energy sources, slash carbon emissions and boost competition in the face of tension over Russian oil and gas supplies and global warming fears.

Calling for a "post industrial revolution," the European Union's executive arm said the 27-nation bloc "needs new policies to face new realities." Some provisions of the proposal drew immediate objections from France and Germany, however.

"Europe must lead the world into a new, or maybe one should say, post industrial revolution—the development of a low carbon economy," commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso told journalists.

"We have already left behind our coal-based industrial past, it is time to embrace our low carbon future," he added.

The main planks of the package, which the commission hopes EU leaders will endorse at a summit in March, include plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 20 percent of 1990 levels by 2020 and to spur competition by demanding that big energy companies separate production and distribution operations.

Environmentalists charged that the emissions target was not ambitious enough however, while some EU governments, notably France, balked at the prospect of energy companies having to break up their operations to boost competition.

Energy issues have climbed to the top of the EU's political agenda over the last year owing to surging oil prices and concerns about the reliability of Russian oil and gas supplies.

Fresh anxiety about Russian energy was sparked this week after the flow of Russian oil to five EU states—including Germany—was disrupted due to a transit dispute between Moscow and Belarus.

But Belarus said Wednesday it had lifted a demand that Russia pay transit fees on oil exports passing through Belarussian territory, clearing the way for a resolution of the dispute.

Barroso nonetheless maintained that the flap had damaged the credibility of both sides and said it was "unacceptable" that EU supplies could be cut without consultation.

"We believe that it is not in the interests of the supply countries or the transit countries to appear as not credible," he said. "We believe that it is their duty to try to restore the credibility they have enjoyed for so long." Moscow dismissed such criticism, with a foreign ministry official asserting that Russia had kept EU partners "fully informed about the matter," according to the Interfax news agency. *AFP*

Russia resumes pumping oil via Belarus

MOSCOW—RUSSIA ON THURSday resumed pumping oil to Europe via Belarus, ending a three-day suspension of supplies, the Russian state pipeline operator said.

"Russian oil is flowing through the Druzhba pipeline to Europe," OAO Transneft vice president Sergei Grigoriyev told The Associated Press.

Belarus late Wednesday began delivering oil through the pipeline, to compensate Russia for 79,000 tons of crude that it had illegally siphoned off, Grigoriyev said.

Russia then itself began transporting oil to Germany and a number of Eastern European countries through Belarus at about 8:30 a.m.

The dispute centered on Russia's decision last month to impose a hefty duty on oil exports to Belarus, with Moscow complaining that the previous duty-free regime cost the Russian budget up to $4 billion a year in lost revenues. Belarus reaped billions in revenues by refining cheap Russia oil products and selling them at hefty profit to European markets.

Minsk—whose centrally controlled economy relies on cheap Russian energy and duty-free trade with Russia—responded last week by slapping $45 per ton tax on Russian oil pumped across Belarus to Europe.

On Monday, Russia stopped pumping oil to Europe via the Druzhba pipeline—whose name translates as "friendship"—and accused its neighbor of siphoning off oil. *AP*

El Niño weakening, expert says

CANBERRA—THE EL NIÑO weather pattern in the Pacific, blamed for severe drought in Australia, is losing intensity and normal rains may return in months, an Australian government climatologist said on Thursday.

El Niño events occur at irregular intervals and are caused by a warming of sea temperatures in the Pacific, bringing drought to Australia and eastern parts of Indonesia, but heavy rains to the arid coast of Peru.

Since late November, equatorial sea-surface temperatures have cooled by about 0.1 to 0.4 Celsius (0.2 to 0.7 Fahrenheit), while cold sub-surface waters have moved into the eastern Pacific Ocean.

"The main drought-affected areas have been through the south and the east (of Australia), and what we typically see during the end of an El Niño is for increased rainfall in those parts of the country," Climate Meteorologist Grant Beard of Australia's Weather Bureau told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio.

Beard said wetter conditions across Australia could occur as soon as February or March as traditional end-of-summer rains arrived, although there was a danger El Niño could strengthen again for a month or two before finally dissipating.

Much of Australia's southeast has been in drought for several years, with some water experts saying the dry spell is the worst in 1,000 years. *Reuters*

OH, FOR LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES
A man enjoys the sunset as he takes a break on a wooden pier at the Ammersee in Herrsching, southern Germany, on Jan. 10. Temperatures reached up to 14 degrees Celsius (57 Fahrenheit) in Germany. AP

India serial killer suspect admits sex with dead bodies

NEW DELHI—A SUSPECT IN the gruesome murders of 17 people, mostly children, near the Indian capital has told investigators he had sex with the dead bodies and ate their organs, a report said Thursday.

The Times of India said Surender Koli admitted to carrying out the crimes alone and that his employer, businessman Moninder Singh Pandher who has also been arrested and charged, was unaware of the killing spree.

The grisly revelations emerged after the two accused were subjected to "narco-analysis"—including truth drugs, polygraph tests and brain mapping—at a national forensic laboratory.

Results of the tests are not admissable as evidence in court, but are designed to help police with their investigation.

The two were arrested on Dec. 29 from New Delhi's affluent Noida suburb after an overwhelming stench led to the discovery of carefully chopped-up body parts in a drain next to Pandher's home.

But Pandher was apparently unaware that his servant used sweets and chocolates to lure the victims to the house, before killing them and raping their bodies, the Times of India said.

Koli, who previously worked as a cook in a hotel, narrated how and when he killed his 17 victims with precision. He also remembered the names of 15 victims, the newspaper said, quoting unnamed investigators involved in the tests.

"Sahab (master) did not know," Koli was quoted as telling investigators, adding the murders were committed when Pandher was away.

Asked what he had done with the missing torsos of the victims, Koli disclosed that he ate some of the organs and cut up others and flushed them down the toilet. The dismembered parts were disposed of separately. *AFP*

Nicaragua's Ortega a changed man, but is still a leftist

By Greg Brosnan

MANAGUA—ONE OF A FEW MEN IN history to take power first by force and later by ballot, Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega has matured since he rolled into Managua in a jeep with a rifle in hand leading a 1979 revolution.

Chastened by nearly 17 years in opposition, Ortega returned to office on Wednesday after promising to avoid his past mistakes that helped drive Nicaragua into a civil war with US-backed Contra rebels.

But the pull of the old days is still strong, and Ortega, who easily won a presidential election in November, is making friends with leaders seen in Washington as troublemakers.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, the most vocal US foe in Latin America, and his ally Bolivian President Evo Morales attended Ortega's inauguration. After Ortega took the oath of office, the three men raised their fists in the air in a sign of victory.

Ortega railed against "savage capitalism," saying it had left millions of Nicaraguans trapped in hunger, illiteracy and misery. "We now face the challenge of taking a new path, a path that allows Nicaraguan families to live with dignity," he said.

A far cry from the Cold War, when Nicaragua was a Soviet ally under Ortega's Sandinistas, the Central American nation is now a US partner and sent troops to Iraq briefly in 2003.

Nicaragua is in a regional free trade pact with Washington—an agreement Ortega supports—and its economy would plummet without the money sent home by immigrants in the United States.

Ortega has also changed with the times.

Gone are the austere olive green military fatigues on a skinny frame, the unfashionable thick-rimmed glasses and the fiery rhetoric against "Yankee imperialism."

Instead, the balding Sandinista Party leader drives a Mercedes Benz sport utility vehicle, uses contact lenses and dresses well. Only his thick mustache remains.

The former urban guerrilla who was jailed and tortured for fighting the US-backed dictatorship he later toppled now prefers to talk about God, peace, love and reconciliation.

Church leaders and senior former Contra rebel leaders have been won over, including his vice president, Jaime Morales.

Nicaragua is the second poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere and many have high expectations after Ortega's election victory over a divided right.

Nicaraguans voted the Sandinistas out of office in 1990, tired of the civil war that killed some 30,000 people.

Ortega and two brothers were senior commanders in the long guerrilla war that finally ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979. Ortega was arrested at age 15 and later jailed for seven years for robbing a bank to finance the revolution. *Reuters*

FORMER revolutionary Daniel Ortega waves to supporters in Managua after taking office as new president of Nicaragua Jan. 10. AP

WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

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BARRERA

Barrera-Marquez on

Pacquiao to defend Int'l crown in Macau

MARQUEZ

DUE TO A RAGING PROMOtional battle over Manny Pacquiao, the World Boxing Council has approved the voluntary defense of Marco Antonio Barrera of his WBC super featherweight title against Juan Manuel Marquez on March 17.

At the same time, Pacquiao was allowed by the WBC to defend his International super featherweight crown, either against Korean Injin Chi or another top challenger, on April 28 in Macau.

The WBC had earlier ruled during its annual convention that the winner of the Pacquiao-Erik Morales "Grand Finale" last November be installed as the mandatory challenger to Barrera, and get an outright chance to challenge the Mexican world champion.

But with Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions and Bob Arum's Top Rank outfit now waging a court battle to promote Pacquiao, the Mexico-based WBC had to cancel a planned purse bid for the Pacquiao-Barrera fight, citing that it needed to do "more research" on the matter.

Apparently, the WBC did not want to strip the GBP-promoted Barrera of the WBC title for failure to defend against Pacquiao, while at the same time, giving Pacquiao and promoter Bob Arum a consolation by ruling that the Filipino icon can opt to defend his WBC International title in Macau.

The letter by WBC president Jose Sulaiman to GBP stated that "due to the difficult controversy and with the case being in Federal Court in the United States, the WBC will approve a voluntary defense by Marco Antonio Barrera against Juan Manuel Marquez on March 17 in Las Vegas,

BARRERA/ A24

RP Open blasts off Feb. 1 at Wack Wack

By Musong R. Castillo

WITH A HUGE CASH SHORTAGE NOW solved, the 91st staging of the Philippine Open will be held from Feb. 1-4 at Wack Wack, the tournament serving as the Asian Tour's third leg for the year.

Total prize money will now be $300,000 (close to P15 million) from $200,000 the year before, making it an attractive stop for some of the bigger names in the circuit.

Australian Scott Strange is the defending champion.

The event, Asia's oldest national championship, was supposed to have been played on Jan. 11-14 before a shortage of close to P10 million threatened to push the tournament to as far as a May playdate.

PAGUNSAN

"Our joint efforts with the NGAP (National Golf Association of the Philippines) have made this possible," Benjamin Abalos, the president of Wack Wack, told the INQUIRER over the phone yesterday.

"What happened was we became complacent because we thought that the Asian Tour would be taking care of everything," he added. "It was just a case of miscommunication."

Organizers of the Konica UBix Pro-Am, meanwhile, reportedly expressed disgust at the latest development since the Open will run smack into their scheduled playdate at The Riviera in Silang, Cavite.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, ICTSI president Ricky Razon, Patrick Young of the Asian Tour, NGAP president Leandro Mendoza and Abalos were mentioned in an official press release as the people responsible for putting up the funds needed.

Abalos confirmed that a total of P25 million, counting overhead expenses, was raised in the short time that the Open was announced postponed.

Juvic Pagunsan is expected to again banner the local challenge as he plays in this tournament for only the second time as a professional.

The 28-year-old, who won the Asian Tour's Rookie of the Year award last year, was the low amateur in the previous three Opens before last year, where he checked in sixth.

There will be a total of 29 tournaments to be organized by the Asian Tour, which will be giving away a record $26 million.

Dableo, Laylo prime game-fixing suspects

LAYLO

DABLEO

TOLENTINO

ESTIMO

INTERNATIONAL Masters Ronald Dableo and Darwin Laylo, who competed in the recent Asian Games, are prime game-fixing suspects based on their performance in last year's Tanauan Open, National Chess Federation of the Philippines executive director Samuel Estimo said yesterday.

Estimo, a lawyer, said there was overwhelming evidence that the two dropped their respective matches to fellow IM Chito Garma, who eventually topped the P100,000 Tanauan event and won an additional P25,000 as bonus for being the solo champion.

"*Kitang-kita dun sa score-sheet na binigay ni* Dableo *at Laylo yung kanilang laban kay* Garma (It was evident in the score sheets that they dropped their games to Garma)," Estimo told the INQUIRER.

Garma, whom an NCFP insider said was willing to testify, garnered a total of 10.5 points out of the possible 11.0 in the Tanauan Open.

Grandmaster Mark Paragua is also being implicated, but Estimo said that evidence against Paragua was not strong.

Garma turned back Laylo in the seventh round and Dableo in the ninth before clinching the pivotal win against Paragua in the final round.

But Estimo said that they are investigating Paragua because Garma was just half-a-point ahead of Joey Antonio going into the final round.

Dableo, Laylo and Garma are vying in the ongoing Asian Zonals in Vietnam with Antonio and other top Filipino players.

"Aside from Tanauan Open, we are also looking into other tournaments, which we suspect to have been tainted with game-fixing," said Estimo, a former Olympian.

Also being accused of game-fixing are Oliver Barbosa, Alex Milagrosa, Dino Ballecer, Mirabeau Maga, Merben Roque, Ferdinand Leysa and women players Lamiel Bernales, Sheerie Joy Lomibao and Enerose Magno.

Antonio, a 12-time national champion, said that one of the reasons why he and fellow GM Eugene Torre have shied away from local tournaments is because of the "networking" scam.

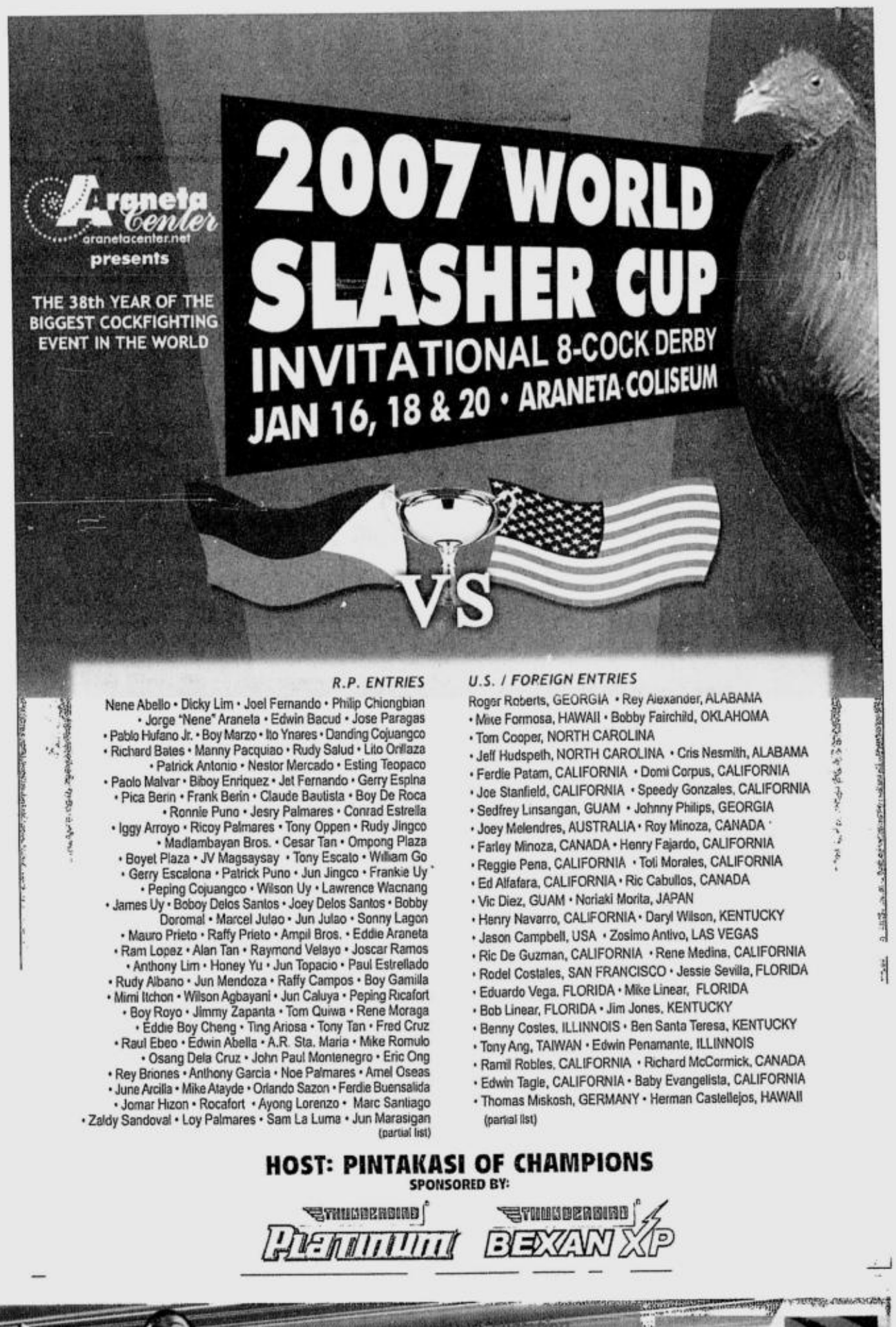
"I don't think I can score 10.5 out of 11 in that tournament (Tanauan Open)," Antonio told the INQUIRER in Filipino. "That's why Eugene (Torre) and I avoided playing in local tournaments last year because the "networking" scam has become so rampant."

Estimo said the result of the investigation will be submitted to the NCFP board, which will decide what sanction to impose on the guilty players.

NCFP president and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. has declared that "no sacred cow" will be spared in the association's drive to clean the sport.

NCFP secretary general and Tagatay City mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr. said they are still treating the suspects as innocent until proven otherwise.

He also urged others with knowledge of game-fixing to provide them with information that would help solve the problem. *NM Marlon Bernardino*



Hapee-PCU halts skid; Moneymen triumph

By Jasmine W. Payo

ACE PAIR MARK BORBORAN AND JASON Castro combined to resurrect Hapee-PCU's PBL campaign yesterday.

Castro scattered 18 points and Borboran added 11 as Hapee-PCU snapped its three-game skid with an 88-73 triumph over winless Kettle Korn-UST in the Silver Cup at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym.

The victory revived the Teeth Masters' chance for an outright semifinal berth as they tied Henkel Sista for second place at 6-3. Mail and More grabbed the solo lead last Tuesday with a 7-2 slate.

In the second game, reserve Don Dulay shot all his 12 points in the second half as Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala regained its winning form with a 75-70 triumph against Magnolia Ice Cream.

"It's nice that our second unit stepped up—(Cris) Viardo, Dulay and (Mark) Yee," said coach Luigi Trillo after the Moneymen improved their record to 4-5.

The Spinners absorbed their third straight setback for a 2-7 slate.

"We now have an organized half court, our fastbreak is back," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Noel. "The team lost its confidence (during the losing skid), but I told them we have a good system. They must have faith and trust in the system."

The Teeth Masters surprisingly dropped three straight games after opening the conference with five straight victories.

Kettle Korn-UST, which played without its five key players, stumbled to its ninth straight loss.

The Pop Kings missed the services of team top scorer Jojo Duncil, Dylan Ababou, Jun Cortez, Warren de Guzman and Mark Canlas due to various injuries.

Dulay pumped in nine points in a 14-5 charge that turned a 47-52 deficit into a 61-57 edge for the Moneymen midway in the fourth quarter. Doug Kramer, who finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds, then made sure the Moneymen would stay ahead for good.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Mail and More
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs TeleTech

Japs Cuan and Frederick Hubalde dictated the tempo in the opening minutes to lead Kettle Korn-UST to a 20-19 edge at the end of the first quarter.

But Borboran and Castro spearheaded a surge that gave the Teeth Masters their first double-digit lead, 39-28.

Larry Rodriguez and Mark Moreño extended Hapee-PCU's margin to 51-32, then the Teeth Masters' reserves boosted the lead to 26 points, 66-40, late in the third period.

The scores:

First Game

HAPEE-PCU 88—Castro 18, Borboran 11, Hugnatan 10, Sanz 10, L. Rodriguez 10, Belga 6, Moreño 6, Butel 5, Navarro 4, David 4, Larong 2, Amparado 1, Bucao 1, J. Rodriguez 0, Razon 0.

KETTLE KORN-UST 73—Evangelista 16, Hubalde 14, Cuan 9, Santos 8, Taylor 7, Espiritu 6, Urbiztondo 5, Dela Cruz 4, Sierra 2, Dizon 2.

Quarters: 19-20, 41-28, 68-45, 88-73

Second Game

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 75—Kramer 18, Yee 13, Dulay 12, Bono 11, Viardo 10, Dela Cuesta 6, Solis 2, Escalona 2, Abadia 1, Luanzon 0, Oreta 0.

MAGNOLIA 70--Chan 22, Ekwe 16, Villanueva 7, Custodio 6, Aljamal 5, Escobal 5, Menor 5, Gamalinda 4, Tecson 0, Angeles 0, Taganas 0, Raneses 0, Natividad 0, Barcellano 0, Bombeo 0.

Quarters: 15-21, 30-35, 47-52, 75-70

HAPEE'S Jason Castro and Kettle Korn's Frederick Hubalde fight for the rebound yesterday at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym. ERIK ARAZAS

12 int'l tilts for RP pugs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE BOXING WILL HAVE A FULL schedule this year as part of its Olympic training program, highlighted by two National Opens that will decide who will be in the RP lineup.

This was announced by Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez, who attended the briefing held by the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee last Tuesday.

Lopez said he has submitted his plans and program for the year, including the hiring of a Cuban coach and taking part in 12 international events.

Boxing is being touted as the strongest suit of the country's drive for the first Olympic gold medal, especially after Joan Tipon and Violito Payla hacked out gold medals in the recent Doha Asian Games.

But Lopez said Payla and Tipon will still have to undergo the same procedure as the rest if they want to be in the national Olympic team.

Foremost in the Abap calendar is the World qualifying in Morocco in November, a month before the Thailand SEAG. The national boxers will take part in tournaments in New Delhi in February and in Germany in March.

In April, there will be competitions in Thailand (King's Cup) and in Cuba, aside from the National Open. May will bring the boxers to Turkey, while they will compete in France and Kazakhstan in June. In August, there will be the Seoul Cup and a tournament in Romania, before a meet in Mongolia in September.

Barrera-Marquez . . .

From page A23

Nevada."

However, the WBC emphasized that the day after the Barrera-Marquez showdown, the free negotiation period between the winner and Pacquiao should commence, and should both parties fail to come to terms, the WBC will order a purse bid 21 days after the voluntary defense.

At that time, regardless of whether the fighters are still entangled in legal tug-of-war or not, if Pacquiao does not accept the fight, he would lose his mandatory challenger status. If Barrera or Marquez doesn't accept the fight, his WBC title would then be declared vacant.

The promotional row arose when Pacquiao signed up for a seven-fight deal with GBP last September and for which he was given a $500,000 signing bonus.

But after knocking out Morales in November, Pacquiao announced he was sticking it out with Arum and then confirmed this commitment only recently in a press conference at the Manila Hotel.

Barrera wants to fight Pacquiao not only to avenge his 11th-round loss to the Filipino in 2003, but in the hope of a richer payday. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Express, Realtors dispute last q'final slot

By Musong R. Castillo

AIR21 AND STA. LUCIA, TEAMS WITH totally different styles, slug it out today for the last quarterfinal seat in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay.

Gametime is 7 p.m. with the odds, curiously, favoring the weaker Express owing to a string of three wins in the wild card phase that gave them this KO shot.

"I just hope that we come out with the same intensity the way we did against them (last Friday)," Air21 coach Bo Perasol said after experiencing some anxious moments before surviving Coca-Cola on Wednesday, 111-106.

GAME TODAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
7 p.m.—Air21 vs Sta. Lucia

The Express scored a 121-99 blowout of the Realtors the last time they met, only their first victory over Sta. Lucia in three meetings so far but one which could prove enough to make Air21 to play with a lot of confidence.

Air21's running game has worked wonders so far, but the same cannot be said of the Realtors' slow, deliberate execution, with the team winning just once in three wild card assignments.

The Realtors will come into this KO match the losers of eight of their last 11 matches, counting a 91-99 setback to Alaska on Wednesday.

Sta. Lucia actually ended the wild card phase with an 11-10 card, while the Express closed out with a 10-11 tally. But the sweep made them avail of a special privilege in the round.

"I always tell the boys that we need to win four games, not three," Perasol said. "It's going to be an interesting game."

Gary David, rookie Arwind Santos, Wynne Arboleda and Mark Telan will be at the forefront of the Air21 offense.

Skipper Dennis Espino is listed as doubtful for the Realtors because of a leg injury, but the former Santo Tomas ace is not expected to sit this one out because of its significance. Marlou Aquino, Kenneth Duremdes, Alex Cabagnot and super rookie Kelly Williams will lead the Realtors.

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Awards receive support

LONG TIME friends and several new partners are lending their hands when last year's top achievers in Philippine sports are honored in the SMC-PSA Annual Awards on Jan. 18 at the Entertainment Hall of the SM Mall of Asia.

Giant conglomerate San Miguel Corp. has again renewed its ties with the country's oldest media organization in staging the event set from 3-5 p.m.

Also throwing their support to the affair are SM Mall of Asia, the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Basketball Association, Philippine Basketball League, Welcoat, Harbour Centre, Teletech, sportsman Hermie Esguerra, Air 21, Channel 4 and Sports Radio.

Channel 4 will be showing the awards rite on a delayed basis, but it will be covered live by Sports Radio 918.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad and Southeast Asian Games gold medalist karateka Gretchen Malalad are hosting the program.

Boxing hero Manny Pacquiao leads the honorees named by the PSA as its 2006 Athletes of the Year.

SPORTSWATCH

KidzHoops bares 2007 calendar

KIDZHOOPs, THE ONLY COMMUNITY-INSPIRED BASKETBALL LEAGUE, WILL hold three conferences for 2007. The first conference is set on Jan. 14. Leveling is at 2 p.m. after the registration at 1 p.m. at the RFM Gym, Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City. The tournament proper starts Feb. 4. Boys and girls, ages 8 to 14, are encouraged to participate in this all-Sunday tournament. The league has two age groups: 11 & under and 14 & under. For a registration fee of P1500, participants are assured of four league games and one tourney game with certified officials. Log on to www.kidzhoops.com or call 3710639, 0917-2779134.

Benilde booters try to gain ground

THE COLLEGE of ST. BENILDE BOOTERS TRY TO GAIN GROUND ON THE pacesetters when they figure in two matches in the PFF-Ang Liga Pilipina football tournament tomorrow (Saturday) at the Marikina Sports Complex field. In sixth place with a 2-5 win-loss card, CSB battles Sphere at 10 a.m. then takes a breather before tackling San Beda College at 1 p.m. in the tourney organized by the Philippine National Women's Football Association. Sphere stayed in fourth place but climbed to 5-3 after routing San Beda, 14-0.

Hawaii cockers join Makati Int'l Derby

HAWAIIAN COCKERS ROBERT DADIS, PETER SARTE, RANDY TANAKA AND Randy Jugas yesterday confirmed their participation in the Makati International 8-Cock Super Derby on Feb. 5, 7 and 9 at the Makati Coliseum. Promoters are Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. The event offers a guaranteed prize of P3 million. Also raring to field their prized gladiators are Dink Fair and Jerry Cottam of Oklahoma, Rey Westal of New Mexico, Jerry Wesson of Iron City, Alabama, Jay Gentry of Lousiana, Jess Casey and Randy Hall of Texas, Jaime Bustle of Kentucky, Fil-Ams Aster Lopez, Joe Cuyugan and Zaldy Sandoval of California. Call 895-6575 and 896-3545 (Joan or Stephanie).

RACING
BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Ort/Tri)—Full of Fury (4), Classy Pages (6), Virgin Hall (3), Alam Mo Na Yan (7)
Race 2—(Ort/Tri)—Bombardier (5), Windtalker (2), Gen-Gen Spirit (6), Devil In Disguise (4)
Race 3—(Ort/Tri)—Miss Lilypilly (1), Mojito (2), Semper Spirit (3), Sweet Xarah (4)
Race 4—(Ort/Tri)—Western Champ (2), Brigade Boss (8), Ray Moon Star (1), Sweetsouthernsaint (3)
Race 5—(Ort/Tri)—Bilingaling (6), Sguttler (7), Rain Dancer (5), Complexion/Dualargo (4)
Race 6—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Dona Gelay (4), Red Hot Water (8), The Magician (9), Extreme Romance (5), Half Medium (6)
Race 7—(Gung Ho (4), Rebecca's Magic (1), Speed Attraction (2), Lynajonik (5)
Race 8—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Commodore Tiger (8), Lord of All (1), San Diego Force (2), Mindpower Miss (5), Classic Appeal (3)
Race 9—(Super 6/Ort/Tri)—Brazen Truth (3), Reign of Fire (4), Real Material (9), Valiant Queen (7), Wing-Away (6), Wynona Raider (10)

BEST FINISH: Tagaytay-Spring Cooking Oil's coach Efren Garcia (red shirt) turns over to Tagaytay City Mayor and NBC executive vice president Bambol Tolentino the runner-up trophy won by the Cooking Oil Masters in the recent NBC National Cup tournament while NBC president and national shooting champion Nathaniel Tac Padilla looks on. It was Tagaytay-Spring's best finish so far in the three-year regional cagefest.

Knicks extend Sixers' woes

NEW YORK—STEPHON MARBURY scored 24 points as the New York Knicks won their third straight game, downing the reeling Philadelphia 76ers, 106-99, in NBA play on Wednesday.

After the game the Sixers, who lost their fourth straight game, confirmed they had completed the paperwork on a buyout for veteran forward Chris Webber and forwarded it to the league office for approval.

Barring any problems, the club will waive Webber on Thursday. Webber had 1-½ years left on his contract that would pay him $21 million this season and $22 million in 2007-08.

Webber has missed 11 of the past 14 games with foot and ankle injuries, but he has reportedly been unhappy being involved with a team rebuilding as Philadelphia (9-26) clearly is.

The trade of Allen Iverson recently sent a clear message the team was going to try and rebuild with youth.

Acquired from Sacramento in a blockbuster trade in February 2005, Webber has been a disappointment in Philadelphia for the most part and had seen his role dramatically reduced in recent weeks by coach Maurice Cheeks when he was in the lineup.

On court, the Knicks never trailed and blew open the game with a big third quarter to improve to 7-4 since their brawl with the Denver Nuggets last month.

Eddy Curry added 20 points and had 10 rebounds for New York, while Quentin Richardson added 19 as the Knicks (16-21) won for the fifth straight time at home.

Samuel Dalembert scored 18 points and Joe Smith had 16 for the Sixers, who have lost 16 of their last 19 road games.

Raymond Felton led six Charlotte players in double-digits as the Bobcats upset the Detroit Pistons, 103-96, in Auburn Hills.

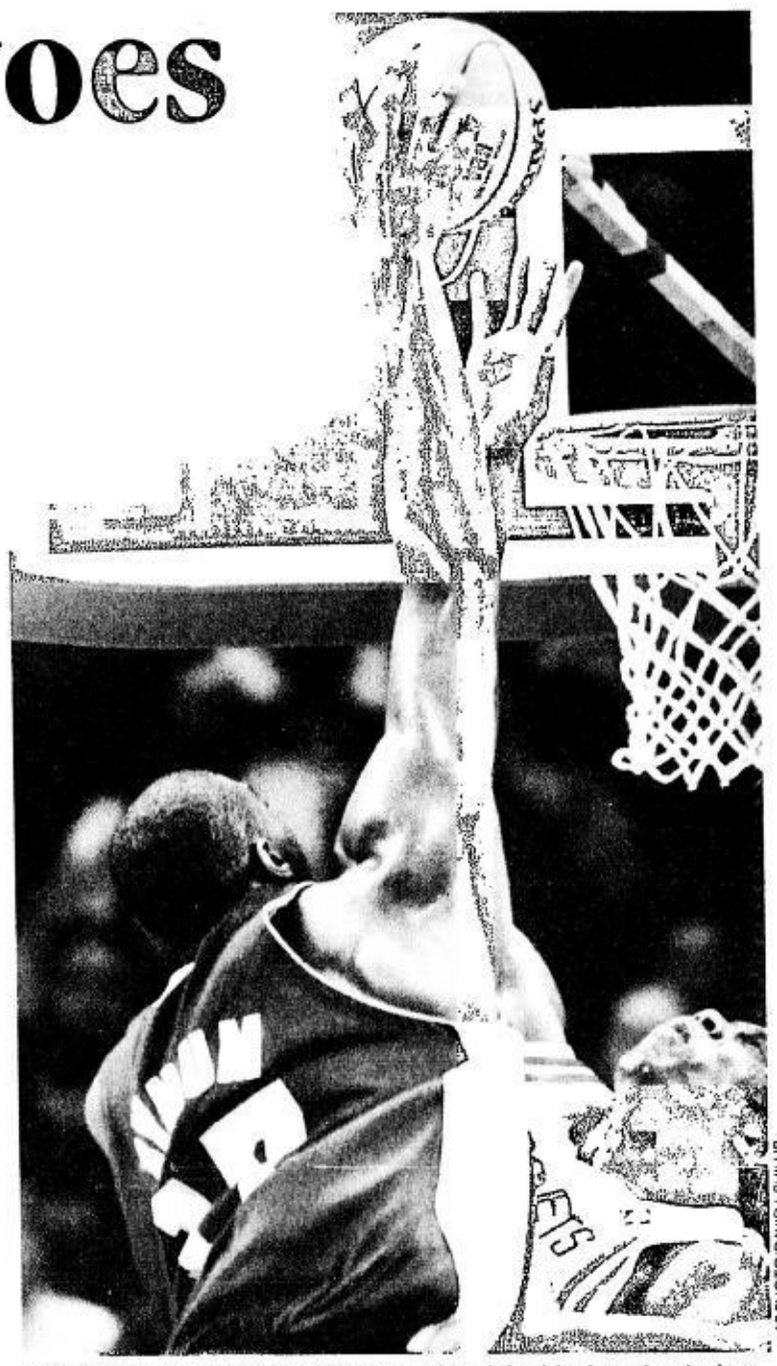
Corey Maggette scored 21 points, including the go-ahead basket with less than five seconds left, lifting the Los Angeles Clippers past the Minnesota Timberwolves, 92-91, ending Minnesota's four-game winning streak.

Dikembe Mutombo had five blocks to move into second place on the all-time list as the Houston Rockets crushed the Los Angeles Lakers, 102-77. Mutombo also had a season-high 19 rebounds, and now has 3,191 blocks, moving past Kareen Abdul-Jabbar.

The Dallas Mavericks won for the 15th time in their past 16 games, routing the Portland Trail Blazers, 99-74.

Tony Parker scored 26 points as the San Antonio Spurs edged the Denver Nuggets, 92-83. *Reuters*

COMPLETE RESULTS: New Orleans 96, Atlanta 77, Washington 113, Chicago 103, Indiana 97, Boston 84, New York 106, Philadelphia 99, LA Clippers 92, Minnesota 91, Charlotte 103, Detroit 96, Houston 102, LA lakers 77, Dallas 99, Portland 74, Toronto 90, Milwaukee 77, San Antonio 92, Denver 83, Miami 107, Seattle 103, Orlando 91, Golden State 76



AP PHOTO/DAVID J. PHILLIP

HOUSTON Rockets' Dikembe Mutombo, right, blocks a shot by Los Angeles Lakers' Andrew Bynum during the third quarter of their NBA basketball game Wednesday in Houston.

RP booters tackle Malaysia

THE PHILIPPINE TEAM hardly merited attention on the eve of the Asean Football Championships.

International football pundits have ruled out the possibility of the Filipino booters going past the group stage of the tournament formerly known as the Tiger Cup that starts today in Bangkok.

While experts expect three-time champion and co-host Thailand to breeze through the group stage with 2004 semifinalists Malaysia and Myanmar slugging it out for the last semis berth, pundits bypassed discussion on the Philippines, which worked its way to Bangkok by placing second in the qualifying stage in Bacolod City last November.

But national coach Aris Caslib likes it that way. "It's a motivation for us to work harder," Caslib told the INQUIRER on the eve of their opening match against Malaysia set at 5:30 p.m. at the Suphchalasai Stadium. The match will be shown live on Star Sports.

Thailand and Myanmar collide in the second game at 8 p.m.

"My players have gone through a high level of play. But this competition would be tougher that's why we need to maximize our chances," said Caslib, who guided the Filipinos to their first win in the Tiger Cup in Malaysia in 2004 when it nipped Timor Leste, 2-1, in a no-bearing match. *Cedelf P. Tupas*

Philippine telecast:
Jan. 12—RP vs Malaysia 5:30 p.m. (LIVE) on Star Sports

JELENA Jankovic of Serbia wears a bandage on her thigh during her semifinal win over Nicole Vaidisova of the Czech Republic.

REUTERS/WILL BURGESS

Strongest Man Sebastian; 53

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JAIME SEBASTIAN, SOUTHEAST ASIA'S "Strongest Man," succumbed to a lingering illness Wednesday morning in his hometown of Zamboanga City, his relatives said yesterday. He was 53.

The SEA Games seven-time gold medalist, who in his final years became an advocate for national athletes and coaches, had what doctors termed as "hypertensive crisis" with complications brought about by his diabetic condition at the Zamboanga General Hospital.

A converted Muslim, Sebastian left behind two wives and three children.

Sebastian has survived six previous strokes since December 2001, when he was still an active consultant for the Philippine Sports Commission, said his second wife Roselle.

Sebastian has dominated the SEAG heavyweight class from 1977 to 1989, which earned him a Hall of Fame award from the Philippine Sportswriters Association, according to Roselle, whom he has a five-year-old son Jamil.

In 1991 when the SEAG was held in the country for the second time, Sebastian blew his campaign after dislocating his shoulder while in competition. Interment and burial details were to be announced, said Roselle.

Tour champ Bonzo dies

PHILIPPINE CYCLING LOST A CHAMPION yesterday when Romeo Bonzo, the first rookie winner of the fabled Marlboro Tour in 1983, was killed in a vehicular accident in his hometown of Sual in Pangasinan.

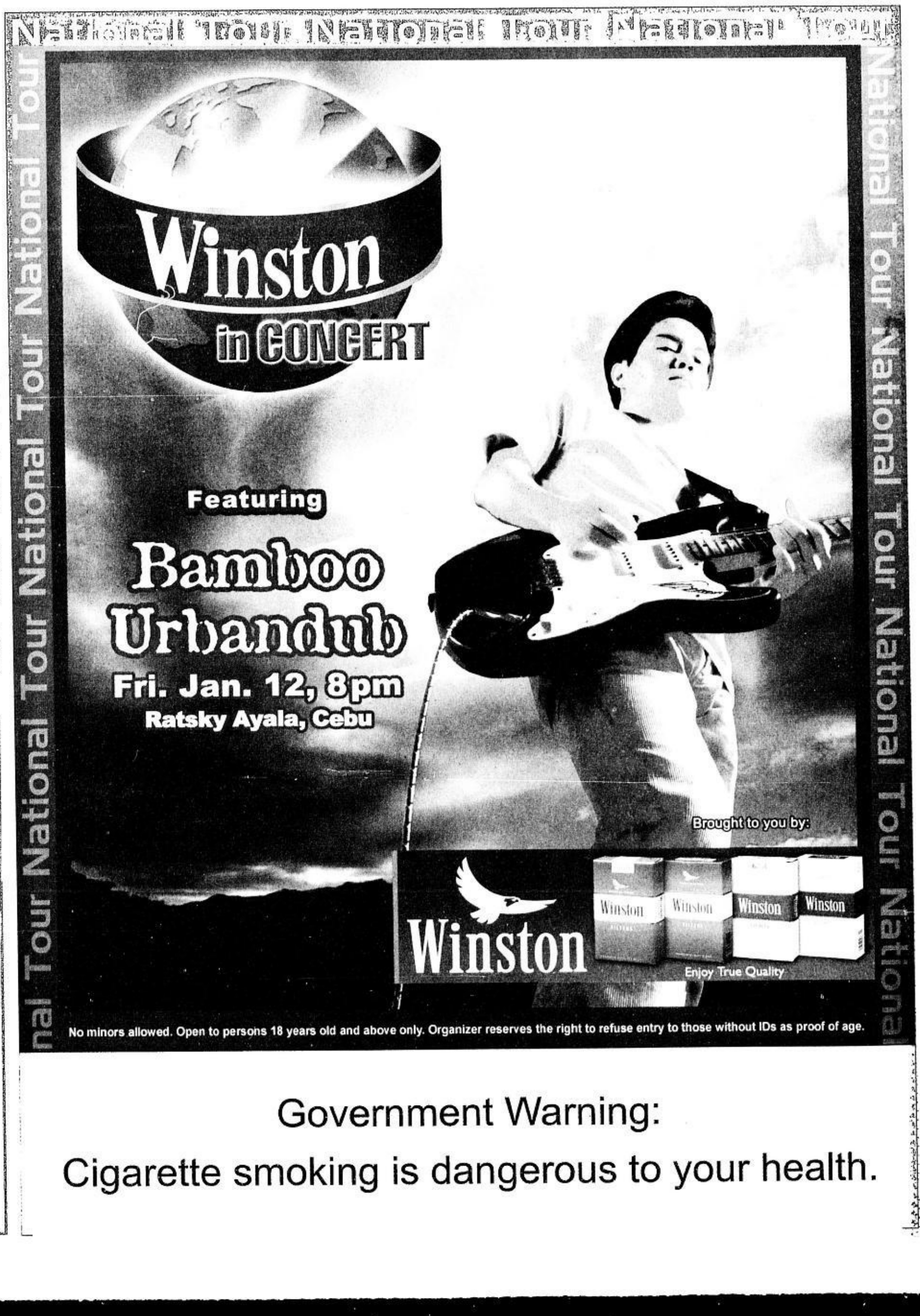
Bonzo, who left behind wife Clarita Sison Bonzo of Labrador town and five children, including the promising junior rider Mark Julius, was 49.

According to his elder brother Modesto, the 1976 Tour champion, Bonzo was struck while riding his motorcycle by a Mistubishi Delica van on the Sual national highway at mid-morning yesterday.

Modesto said his brother expired while being rushed to the hospital.

The driver of the Delica, who remained unidentified as of yesterday, surrendered himself to the police. Bonzo's relatives said the driver did not intend to escape from the scene and even helped bring the former champion to the hospital.

"It is still under investigation and what I am getting are all sketchy," said Modesto, who was in Quezon City when the accident happened to attend a meeting of the Philippine National Cycling Association (PNCA).



Government Warning:

Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2007

SPORTS

Bata, Django boost title drive

DEFENDING CHAMPION EFREN "Bata" Reyes and fellow Filipinos Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Jose "Amang" Parica blasted their opponents yesterday to lead 18 players still in contention in the 2007 Derby City Classic One Pocket Division being held at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky.

The 52-year-old Reyes, playing under the auspices of Philippine billiards patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, beat Michael Cardarelli, Tom Neil, Trevor Braymore, Robert Onashi, Tony Crosby and Fabio Petroni to stay on track of his quest for an unprecedented fourth straight title in the $100,000-plus series.

Bustamante, also from the Puyat sports stable, beat Evgeny Stalev, Steven Lomako, Tony Chohan, Charles Bryant, Brad Ragon, and William Palmer.

The US-based Parica trounced John Nevin, John Lee, Claude Marrier, Ron Wiseman, Tony Hilla and Michael Surber.

Others who advanced were Niels Feijen, Ike Runnels, Scott Rabon, Jeff Abernathy, John Macias, Kim Bennett, Mike Davis, Jason Miller, Cliff Joyner, Thorsten Hohmann, Shawn Putnam, JR Jueco, Mike Surber, Tony Ferguson, and David Gutierrez.

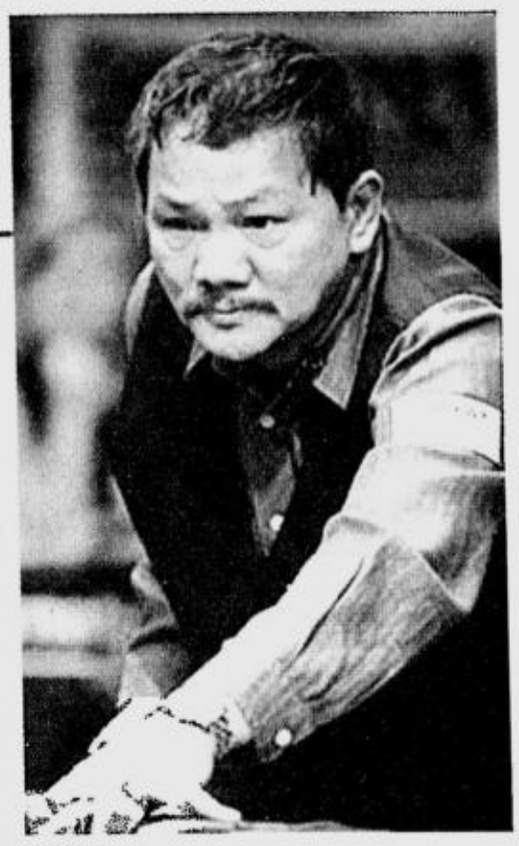
Only Reyes, Bustamante, Parica and Gutierrez have the available Buy-In option.

Not as lucky were Filipinos Rodolfo Luat, Dennis Orcollo, Gandy Valle, Lee Van Corteza, and Santos Sambajon.

Luat saw his 5-game winning run come to an end with back-to-back losses to John Macias and JR Jueco, while Orcollo did not use his Buy-In option after losing to Adam Smith in the second round.

Valle, bounced back from his round one defeat with back-to-back victories over Evert Snow and Willfred Maestas, but succumbed to Shin Young Park to be shown the door.

Corteza ended up winless as he bowed to Shannon Daulton, while Sambajon lost to Adam Smith. The 9-ball division is still in the middle of Round One with 398 players competing. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*



REYES

POF looks for likely Olympians

By June Navarro

WITH THE OLYMPIC HOPEFULS NEXT YEAR IN Beijing still to be chosen, the Philippine Olympic Committee is set to launch a talent identification program for the 2012 London summer games.

The search for future stars will be the objective of the Philippine Olympic Festival, which will kick off next month, according to POC chair Robert Aventajado.

"Talents in the POF are not expected to be fielded in Beijing right away unless there's a freak athlete endowed with skills of Olympic caliber," Aventajado said. "They will be trained and developed for the London Olympics."

To be organized and conducted by the local Olympic body, the POF will have five regional tournaments featuring the best athletes in the provinces who will see action in at least 30 disciplines.

Antique will host the Visayas leg from Feb. 19-25 followed by the Northern Luzon eliminations on March 5-11 in the Ilocos. The other regional tournaments are set in Bicol, Mindanao and Metro Manila.

Medal winners in the regional eliminations will compete in the national championship to be held in Nueva Ecija slated Sept. 3-9 along with the national athletes of the participating national sports associations.

Wrestling chief Vincent Piccio, who is helping the POC in the Antique regional hosting, said the POF would be open not only to school-based athletes but for out-of-school youths as well.

The other talent identification programs by the government such as the Palarong Pambansa and Mindanao Friendship Games are school-based with limited choices of potential national athletes.

Aventajado said the POF will concentrate on tapping athletes in their teens to give him time to mature for the 2012 Olympics.

"We're talking about the London Olympics. If you discover a potential medal winner, you cannot expect him to win at once, especially those who belong to the 15-17 years old age bracket," said Aventajado.

POC to grant SBP blessing

AS FAR AS the Philippine Olympic Committee is concerned, the protracted leadership mess in basketball is practically over.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday said that it's only a matter of time before the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas is recognized as the Olympic body.

"I think they're (SBP officials) on the right track," said Cojuangco. "I just don't know when they will complete the unification process, but this thing (leadership squabble) is over."

Cojuangco said that the SBP should convene its membership in a national congress and elect a set of officers before sounding off the POC about the development.

"We'll just wait for them (SBP officials) to convene and submit the list of officers before we grant them recognition," said Cojuangco.

Once the SBP turns over the minutes of the proceedings in the national congress to the POC, the Olympic body will take the new group under its wings to pave the way for the lifting of the Fiba (International Basketball Federation) suspension.

The SBP was created by a three-man panel headed by telecommunications magnate Manny V. Pangilinan following an agreement between the Basketball Association of the Philippines and Pilipinas Basketball in Tokyo last year to form a unified cage body.

The pact had the blessing of the international basketball federation, which set as a condition for lifting its suspension of the Philippines the creation of a united basketball group.

Pangilinan later agreed to serve as president of the SBP with Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who replaced Joey Lina as BAP president, taking over as chairman but the BAP rejected this show of unity by ousting Estrada as president. The BAP said Estrada was not authorized to make a deal with Pangilinan and insisted that its name be used instead of SBP.

Website: www.inq7money.net

BUSINESS

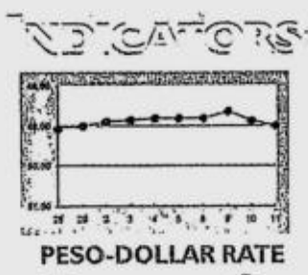
Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Text us your feedback: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

RP racked up $2.6B in net 'hot money' in '06

FDIs registered in first 10 months of last year also up 75% to $1.96B

By Doris C. Dumlao



THE COUNTRY RAKED IN $2.6 billion in net "hot money" inflows in 2006, up by 24 percent from the $2.1 billion posted a year ago, mainly due to foreign investors' aggressive buying of local stocks.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday reported that gross foreign portfolio investments registered with the monetary institution totaled $7.98 billion. This was higher than the capital outflows which amounted to $5.37 billion.

The strong influx of foreign portfolio investments, or funds placed in local stocks, bonds and bank products—often referred to as "hot money" due to their volatile nature—helped lift the peso to six-year highs. The currency rallied 7.6 percent, closing at

RP RACKED/ B4

Shares close 0.37% lower

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.37 percent lower, extending a correction for a second session in the absence of fresh leads, dealers said.

The composite index shed 10.92 points to 2,940.16. It traded between 2,955.29 and a low of 2,938.62.

The broader all-share index was down 3.66 points to 1,840.34.

SHARES/ B3

Philippines to resume sugar exports

A FARMER carrying a basket walks past a sugarcane field in Ilocos Norte. The expected increase in production this year will make it possible for sugar producers to sell the commodity in the international market. AFP

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES THIS YEAR WILL resume sugar exports to markets other than the United States, starting with about 50,000 to 60,000 metric tons, according to the Sugar Regulatory Authority.

With production estimated to reach 2.24 million metric tons this year, the country may now begin selling sugar in the international market, as well as fill its annual export quota to the United States valued at 167,000 tons, SRA Administrator James Ledesma said.

He said the government had allocated for export up to 15 percent, or 336,000 tons, of the country's projected sugar output of 2.24 million tons in the crop year that runs from September 2006 to August 2007.

"Actual exports to the world market will be in the middle of this year," Ledesma said. "This will be around 50,000 to 60,000 metric tons."

Sugar exports to other markets were temporarily stopped in the last crop year due to low production—at 2.1 million metric tons, the volume was barely enough to fill domestic and US quota requirements.

Ledesma said that the plan to re-

PHILIPPINES/ B3

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Tour firms lament** lack of rooms /B2

■ **Vehicle sales** up 2.6% in 2006 /B5

Tour firms lament lack of rooms

Industry turning away tourists

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY turns away hundreds of thousands of tourists a year due to lack of accommodations, and is losing out to other tourist destinations because of lack of seat entitlements from countries such as Japan and Korea.

In a briefing yesterday, Philippine Travel Agencies Association president Jose Clemente III said the industry could have hosted at least 3.5 million tourists last year, but received only about three million visitors, primarily due to the lack of rooms.

"We have to turn away hundreds of tourists every day because of lack of rooms. As a result, the Philippines has become an expensive destination as this is now a sellers' market," he explained.

A "startling" development in the tourism industry, he said, was the absence of distinct peak and off-peak seasons, unlike before when some months were leaner than others.

He said occupancy rates in hotels and resorts all over the country ranges from 70 percent to 80 percent.

PTAA ex-officio chair Marciano Ragaza said it was interesting to note that tourists now went to Boracay Island even during the rainy season.

"Popular tourist destinations like Boracay, Cebu and Davao are suffering from a severe shortage of accommodations," he said.

This, he said, not only painted a bad picture of the Philippines, but also resulted in forgone revenues for the country.

He said each tourist spent an average of $800 in the country.

Multiplying this by the hundreds of thousands, 500,000, for example, would yield a huge amount of money that could have been spent in the country had there been enough rooms, he said.

Another problem of the local tourism industry, he said, was the lack of seat entitlements from countries such as Korea and Japan, the Philippines' top source of tourists.

"Not only is there a shortage of seats from Japan or Korea to Manila, but there is also a lack of seats from Manila to various tourist destinations all over the country," he said. "Local tourists already take up a lot of the available seats. There aren't many seats available for foreign tourists."

He said a pending Tourism Bill should remedy the situation, as this aimed to provide incentives to investors that would enter the tourism industry.

"If they'll look at all the economic benefits, this bill should be top priority. It affects all sectors of society, generates employment and income. Unlike the manufacturing companies that can move to other countries, you can't transport your tourism because your product is here," he said.

Gov't cut expenses by P72B as of Nov.

By Michelle V. Remo

TEVES

THE GOVERNMENT SAVED P72 billion as of November last year due to underspending, according to data from the Department of Finance.

The government had an expense budget of P1.013 trillion during the first 11 months of last year, but it only spent P940.76 billion.

The underspending was largely credited for keeping the government's budget deficit in check.

The deficit as of November stood at only P58.32 billion, 52-percent below the ceiling of P123 billion ceiling set under the fiscal program for January to November.

This prompted finance officials to project that the deficit for 2006 would end below the limit of P125 billion.

But the underspending was unintentional.

The government was forced to spend less last year because of Congress' failure to pass the proposed national budget last year of P1.053 trillion.

The government, therefore, operated under the budget of 2005, which was about P100 billion less.

Congress approved in October a supplemental budget of P46.9 billion, but officials said it came too late for line agencies to spend on their programs for 2006.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the Department of Finance was against the use of the old budget despite its positive effects on the government's fiscal condition.

Teves said the old budget rendered the government unable to spur growth by spending more on infrastructure and basic services.

On the delayed passage of the proposed national budget for 2007, Teves earlier said the executive branch had urged Congress to finally approve it to avoid scrapping vital infrastructure development projects.

But Congress has yet to pass the proposed 2007 national budget of P1.136 trillion.

"(A reenacted budget) would improve our (the government's) fiscal position but it would not be good for the economy in general," Teves had said.

Not all savings, however, were due to underspending. Data from the Department of Finance showed that of the P72 billion worth of savings, P30.78 billion was due to the decline in interest rates, which cut the government's cost of borrowings.

The decline in interest rates was attributed to the government's ability to trim down its budget deficit, which encouraged lenders to ask for lower interest rates on the loans.

City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA invites PhilGEPS registered suppliers/manufacturer/contractors to apply for the following items

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Security Services	P5,169,648.00	Jan. 15, 2007 10:00 AM	Jan. 29, 2007 10:00 AM	P1,500.00
2. Janitorial Services	P3,398,164.00	Jan. 15, 2007 10:00 AM	Jan. 29, 2007 10:00 AM	P1,100.00
3. Concreting of Curuan - Lunday Road, Curan	P9,775,000.00	Feb. 6, 2007 10:00 AM	Feb. 19, 2007 10:00 AM	P3,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting January 8 to 29, 2007 (Item No. 1 & 2) and January 24 to February 2, 2007 (Item No. 3) upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

For Item No. 3. The last day of the submission of the accomplished eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on January 23, 2007; 12:00 noon in the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope; whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope. In the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at Telephone No. (062) 992-7763.

The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 12, 2007)

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NISSAN

DoPod sees big RP market for 'smart' phones

By Riza T. Olchondra

DOPOD INTERNATIONAL CORP., A TAIWAN-based mobile communications company, has entered the Philippine market and has started forging links with local telecommunications players, said the company's managing director for Southeast Asia, Kevin Hou.

Smart Communication, Globe Telecom, Sun Cellular and Eastern Telecom were only some of the companies that DoPod was talking to, the DoPod executive said in a briefing yesterday.

"We are optimistic on the growth of the market in the Philippines," Hou said. "The high-end segment (here) is growing fast and within that segment, the Windows mobile market is growing at an even faster rate."

DoPod is a Taiwan-based distributor of Windows Mobile smartphones founded in 2004 and is now directly owned by the Taiwanese Windows Mobile device manufacturer HTC.

DoPod has manufacturing bases in Taiwan and Wuhan in mainland China.

It has targeted the Philippines, which it considers a sophisticated market after it has successfully established itself in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia and India.

"In Singapore, it took three years to transition from 3G to 3.5G. In the Philippines, it took four months," said Winston Goh, DoPod's senior product manager for Southeast Asia.

To mark the entry of its high-end phones in the local market, DoPod unveiled three new handsets models—the 838Pro PDA phone with sliding keyboard, D810 compact pocket PC and PDA phone, and the M700 music and video phone that can scan a business card and save the information it contains in text form.

All three phones use the Windows mobile software and are GPRS or HSDPA-ready, and have the most advanced WiFi connectivity.

DoPod's phones will be distributed locally by SiS Technologies Phils., the local presence of the phone company's international distributor, SiS Technologies Pte Ltd (Singapore).

"We are thrilled to be a part of the Philippine telecommunications market—one of the most dynamic in the world," said Jack Tong, DoPod's chief executive.

He added that since its inception in 2002, the company has aimed to provide the ultimate in digital connectivity to its customers.

"The launch of DoPod International here in the Philippines represents the start of a new and exciting chapter in the Philippine telecommunications landscape. Our range of Windows Mobile devices will allow Filipino business leaders to manage their business communications while being on the move and still enjoy and experience mobility," Tong said.

Antonio Javier, managing director of Microsoft Philippines said more and more Filipinos were moving toward living the digital lifestyle and there was increasing demand for mobile devices.

"We are very pleased that DoPod International is making available all these new devices in the Philippines. Microsoft is committed to delivering products and services that increase people's productivity in the home, office and even when they're on the go," Javier said.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION OF AWARD

Notice is hereby given that the lot awards of the following beneficiaries in Dagat-Dagatan Development Project are hereby CANCELLED immediately in view of their failure to comply with the conditions of their awards such as non-occupancy, non-payment of their monthly amortization and sold their awarded lots without the consent of the Authority thereof:

	NAME OF AWARDEE	PHASE	OLD BLK.	OLD LOT	NEW BLK.	NEW LOT
1.	ESTANISLAO ALFANTA	I-A	28	8	13	8
2.	LEONCIO G. NUQUE	I-A	33	5	18	5
3.	JESUS RAMPULA	I-A	36	49	21	49
4.	CONCHITA RAYMUNDO (w)	I-A	27	17	12	17
5.	MIGUEL SABANAL	I-A	36	35	21	35
6.	BERNABE MENDOZA	II A1	27C	85	27	85
7.	VIRGINIA TEODORO	II A1	22	94	22	94
8.	FRANCISCA YABUT	II A2	32B	49	32	49
9.	SALVADORA CASIDSID	II A3	16	9	16	9
10.	TOMAS HIBAYA	II A3	9B	18	9	167
11.	LORENZO DERDER	II A4	18	29	18	29
12.	LEONOR DIMANLIG	II A4	38G	13	38G	13
13.	NENITA LARDIZABAL	II A4	38G	23	38G	23
14.	CORNELIO OQUENDO	II A4	37F	15	37F	15
15.	EMILIO BAQUIRAN	III-C	9A	13	9A	13
16.	CARLOS CUELA	III-C	11F	21	8	15
17.	ROGELIO DALIENG	III-C	3B	22	3B	22
18.	MA. LUISA JARATA	III-C	3J	4	3J	4
19.	MONICA KING	III-C	8E	30	8E	30
20.	DULCE MERCADO	III-C	3J	5	3J	5
21.	ERNESTO PAJARES	III-C	14E	21	7	28
22.	ELENO TIMBREZA	III-C	3M	14	3M	14
23.	ELIZABETH CALOING	III-D	5	65	5	65
24.	ELISA DOMINGO	III-D	29	18	29	18
25.	ADELAIDA FORTIN	III-D	30	27	30	27
26.	PAULINO MABUTAS	III-D	19	42	19	42
27.	SUSANA HERMIDA	III-D	32	11	32	11
28.	HERNAME PERATER	III-D	31	25	31	25
29.	ENRIQUETA SANTOS	III-D	9	48	9	48
30.	ROSALINA SANTOS	III-D	4	36	4	36
31.	MELITA TOBIAS	III-D	19	63	19	63
32.	FRANCISCO TRAFALGAR	III-D	29	77	29	77
33.	DEMETRIO CATADMAN, JR.	III-E1	1B	32	1	244
34.	TERESITA ORSAL	III-E1	2F	1	2	79
35.	ESTANISLAWA LACDAN (W)	III-E1	10G	29	10	29
36.	SOCORRO NARAGDAO	III-E1	15C	14	15	49
37.	RUBEN JESUS ASUNCION, JR.	III-E2	44B	4	5B	4
38.	ELIZA BALDOVINO	III-E2	43D	11	4D	11
39.	ALICIA BELLEZA	III-E2	48J	17	9J	17
40.	ANA BONIFACIO	III-E2	49D	34	10D	34
41.	ZENAIDA CALANG	III-E2	45G	24	6G	24
42.	MARINA DE GUZMAN	III-E2	45H	10	6H	10
43.	EDUARDO ESPIRITU	III-E2	46A	23	7A	23
44.	CORAZON RAMOS	III-E2	49K	49	29	49
45.	RICKY DIANO	III-F1	34E	4	1	7
46.	DANTE JAVIER	III-F1	30C	12	1	01
47.	AMPARO MESINA	III-F1	33E	11	18	22
48.	REYNALDO SANTOS	III-F1	39K	1	4	2
49.	SALVADOR VITALICIO	III-F1	33L	28	4	3
50.	ERNESTO PALILEO	III-F2	57B	27	6B	27

(Sgd.) FEDERICO A. LAXA
General Manager

(PDI – January 12, 19, & 26, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT through its Bids and Awards Committee II (BAC II), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippines Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder project:

PR NO.	NAME OF THE PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	PROJECT DURATION
9373	Supply & Construction of Lumiyap Production Well	Contract Work for the Supply & Construction of Lumiyap PW which includes Electrical Work, Civil Work & Hypochlorinator Equipment	Lumiyap Production Well, Zamboanga City	P1,622,816.00	60 Calendar Days upon receipt of NTP
9374	Supply & Construction of Divisoria Production Well	Contract Work for the Supply & Construction of Divisoria PW which includes Electrical Work, Civil Work & Hypochlorinator Equipment	Divisoria Production Well, Zamboanga City	P1,488,396.00	60 Calendar Days upon receipt of NTP
9375	Supply & Construction of Tulungatung II Production Well	Contract Work for the Supply & Construction of Tulungatung II PW which includes Electrical Work, Civil Work & Hypochlorinator Equipment	Tulungatung II Production Well, Zamboanga City	P1,132,206.00	60 Calendar Days upon receipt of NTP

Prospective Contractors shall possess a valid PCAB License with a registration particular in Water Supply, have undertaken a similar project with an amount of 50% of the proposed project for the bidding, and have key personnel and equipment owned, leased or under purchase available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Bidding Documents. The BAC shall use a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility/Screening as well as in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete activities are listed:

BAC ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) including application for Eligibility	January 8 to 19, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	January 8 to 19, 2007
3. Submission of Eligibility Requirements	January 22, 2007
4. Submission of Results of Eligibility Check	January 23, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 24 to 30, 2007
6. Pre-Bid Conference	January 31, 2007
7. Submission and Opening of Bids	February 12, 2007

The Eligibility Forms will be available at the 3rd floor, Zamboanga City Water District, Pilar St., Zamboanga City, upon their submission of Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) for each PR** to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office.

Bid Documents will be available only to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) for each PR** to the Zamboanga City Water Cashier.

The Zamboanga City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidder for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

(Sgd.) LEONARDO REY D. VASQUEZ
BAC-II Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 12, 2007)

RCBC to issue shares worth P7B

Bank hopes to cash in on strong investor appetite for local stocks

By Doris C. Dumlao

RIZAL COMMERCIAL BANKING Corp. of the Yuchengco Group plans to beef up its capital by over P6 billion through an additional public offering, taking advantage of strong investor appetite for local stocks.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, RCBC said its board of directors had approved the additional issuance of 250 million common shares subject to approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the PSE and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

RCBC management will determine the exact price of the shares at a later date, based on the average price of shares on the PSE for ten trading days of a specified period.

RCBC shares are now trading at P28.50 apiece. At that rate, the offering could be worth about P7.12 billion.

But based on similar additional issuances, such as the ongoing exercise by Filinvest Land Inc., and the previous offering of Megaworld Corp., stock analysts said the pricing offered an average discount of 10 percent to market rates.

"It's a good strategy because the stock market is strong," said Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Roxas. "But using market-based pricing might not be a good gauge for RCBC because of thin trading of shares."

The plan to raise fresh capital is a follow-up to RCBC's issuance of $100 million in hybrid tier 1 shares in the last quarter of 2006, and the offer of another P1 billion worth of perpetual but noncumulative preferred shares.

Apart from building its capital base, the bank has reduced its nonperforming loans and real and other properties acquired through the Special Purpose Vehicle Law and private sales by more than P5 billion in 2006.

"The bank is aggressively increasing its capital to drive the growth of its portfolio and distribution reach, consistent with long-term expansion plans," RCBC said.

As of end-September 2006, RCBC posted a net income of P1.159 billion, 60 percent higher than P724 million recorded in the same period of 2005.

Philippines . . .

From page B1

sume export of the commodity would also siphon off the excess sugar produced to maintain domestic farmgate prices to about P700 per 50-kilogram bag to benefit local sugar farmers and producers.

The strong peso and high freight costs have reduced the margins of local sugar exporters, he added.

"I believe the regime of strong prices will continue, and that usually brings about a rebound in production," Ledesma said in an interview. "Despite the high cost of fertilizers, proper cultivation approaches will [be revived] and we will achieve a recovery in production."

The increase in production will complement plans to put up ethanol plants in the country. Any increase in production, he said, would be readily absorbed by the local ethanol market.

The expected rise in production in the 2007-2008 crop year will not likely put pressure on prices, he said.

Ethanol, or ethyl alcohol, is a gasoline additive derived from agricultural feedstock such as sugar, corn, sorghum and cassava.

To try to ease the impact of rising petroleum prices in the world market, the Philippines has approved a legislation this year that will require oil companies to use ethanol as a fuel blend.

Shares close 0.37% lower

From page B1

There were 55 gainers and 49 losers, while 57 stocks ended unchanged. Volume was 2.9 billion shares valued at P3.1 billion ($64 million).

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. led the decliners, closing P50 down at P2,400. Rival Globe Telecom Inc. retreated P35 to P1,195.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. A shares were steady at P63.50, while its B shares gained P1.50 to P75.50.

Power distributor Manila Electric Co's A shares were steady at P55.50, but its B shares fell 50 centavos to P55.50. *AFP*

PRULINK	PRU LIFE U.K
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Jan. 09, 2007 / Last Week Jan. 02, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.61897 / 1.62228
Managed Fund - Peso	1.83381 / 1.83838
Growth Fund - Peso	1.61879 / 1.61319
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3695 / 1.3655

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

INSULAR LIFE (Wealth Builder and Wealth Secure)	Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure	
	UNIT PRICES (In Php)	
	Jan. 8, 2007	Dec. 29, 2006
Fixed Income Fund	1.264042	1.262129
Balanced Fund	1.340728	1.343302
Equity Fund	1.487049	1.496867

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

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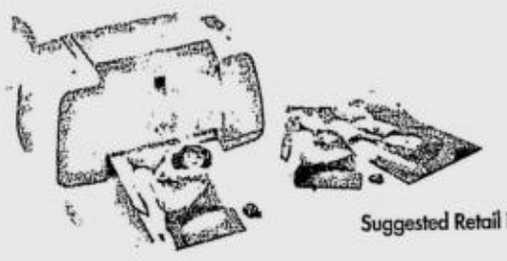
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Ayala unit acquires US BPO firm

Deal brings LiveIt investments in industry to ₱3B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LIVEIT SOLUTIONS INC., THE HOLDING company for Ayala Corp.'s business process outsourcing investments, yesterday said it bought American graphics and design BPO outfit Affinity Express Inc. for $28 million, or about P1.4 billion.

LiveIt chief executive officer Alfredo Ayala said this brought to about P3 billion the total investments infused by the company into the BPO sector since it started operations in June last year.

"We are pleased that we are continuing to make progress toward our goal of investing in the high growth offshore IT and BPO sectors. Globally, these sectors are estimated to have generated $30 billion in revenue in 2005, which is projected to quadruple to $110 billion by 2010," Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, chief executive officer of Ayala Corp., said in a statement.

Of the $28 million invested in Affinity Express, $21 million was paid to four US-based investment funds—Flagship Ventures, Hercules Technology Growth Capital Inc., Ticonderoga Capital and Coop Securities LLC—for their shares in the company. The balance of $7 million will go to Affinity Express and will be used to build its Philippine operations.

Affinity Express plans to launch its second production center, with 200 to 300 seats, in Metro Manila in the first half of the year. It currently employs more than 800 professionals worldwide, with project management and implementation teams in Texas, Ohio, Florida, Connecticut and New York, and a production center in Pune, India. It serves about 3,000 clients worldwide and is the leading provider of graphics and design services in the newspaper, direct mail, quick printing, commercial printing and promotional products industries.

"With our investment, we believe the company now has the optimal combination of people, expertise, market traction and capital that will enable it to continue setting the pace of the global graphics and design services outsourcing industry," Ayala said.

He said LiveIt would continue scouting for more investment options in the BPO sector, particularly in the areas of healthcare, engineering and finance.

The company had said it wanted to invest $100 million over the next five years in mature fast-growing BPO markets in the United States, Philippines and India.

LiveIt and its partners earlier purchased 100 percent of New York-registered BPO solutions provider Integreon Managed Solutions Inc. (IMSI).

Also last year, it bought an 11-percent stake in eTelecare Global Solutions Inc. for about P800 million.

Office of the Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Bldg. 255, Rm. 223 Barryman Road,
Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines 2222
☎ (047) 252-4713 / 4483 • Fax No. (047) 252-4472

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines
SBMA LANDSCAPING WORKS AND REHABILITATION/MAINTENANCE PROJECT
Subic Bay Freeport Zone

Project Description/Scope of Works:
The Works shall include provision of labor, materials, equipment and other incidentals to complete the landscaping works (site preparations, planting works, grassing works, and others) of designated public spaces within Subic Bay Freeport Zone; and rehabilitation/restoration and maintenance of existing turf and garden.

1. The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), through its Corporate Budget for 2007 intends to apply the sum of **Nine Million Pesos (Php 9 Million)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **SBMA Landscaping Works and Rehabilitation/Maintenance Project.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The SBMA now calls for the submission of **Letters of Intent (LOIs) and Application for Eligibility** from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the SBMA Landscaping Works and Rehabilitation/Maintenance Project. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids.
3. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).
4. Information on BAC activities is as follows:

Item No.	BAC Activities	Schedule	Venue
1	Receipt from prospective bidders of LOIs including Application for Eligibility and Issuance of Eligibility Forms	Jan. 16-17, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	BAC Chairman c/o Engineering Department, Room 223, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SBFZ)
2.	Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	Jan. 22, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	BAC Secretariat, Room 203, Bldg. 225, Barrymbn Road, SBFZ
3.	Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	Jan. 26-29, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5 PM	Same address on Item 2
4.	Issuance of Bid Documents	Jan. 30-Feb. 6, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Same address on Item 1
5.	Pre-bid Conference	Feb. 6, 2007; 2:00 PM	PPMD Conference Room, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ
6.	Receipt and Opening of Bids	Feb. 20, 2007; 2:00 PM	Same address on Item 5

5. The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the above address upon their submission of a LOI and Application for Eligibility, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00).**
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00).**
7. Relevant Requirement: Minimum PCAB Registration and Classification/License:
   Specialty
   SP-LS Landscaping
   Small B
8. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, a certified check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC), or bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC) or surety bond (2.5% of ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
9. Completion of the Works is required by **One Hundred Eighty (180) calendar days** from the date stated in the Notice to Proceed.
10. The SBMA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, in accordance with the provisions of RA 9184 without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) ATTY. RAMON O. AGREGADO
BAC Chairman/SDA for Support Services

(PDI – January 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Rd., South Superhighway, Taguig City

52nd TESDA Board Meeting
26 October 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City

Resolution No. 2006-22

APPROVING AND PROMULGATING THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR SLAUGHTERING OPERATIONS NCII, AUTOMOTIVE BODY PAINTING/FINISHING NCI AND AUTOMOTIVE BODY PAINTING/FINISHING NCIII, CONSTRUCTION PAINTING NCII, CONSTRUCTION PAINTING NCIII, PLUMBING NCI, PLUMBING NCIII, SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NCI, SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NCIII, AND SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NCIV

WHEREAS, during 16th and 17th Standard Setting and Systems Development TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 22 August 2006 and 26 September 2006, respectively, the following training regulations were deliberated and favorably recommended to the Executive Committee – TESDA Board for consideration and endorsement to the TESDA Board for approval:

Processed Food and Beverages Sector
Slaughtering Operations NCII

Automotive Sector
Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCI
Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCIII

Construction Sector
Construction Painting NCII
Construction Painting NCIII
Plumbing NCI
Plumbing NCIII

Metals and Engineering Sector
Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCI
Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIII
Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIV

WHEREAS, the Technical Experts have endorsed for promulgation the aforementioned Training Regulations

WHEREAS, during the 46th Executive Committee-TESDA Board Meeting held on 19 October 2006, the results of the deliberation of the training regulations were presented and favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the TESDA Board;

WHEREAS, in the 52nd TESDA Board Meeting held this 26 October 2006, TESDA Board agreed and approved the Training Regulations for Slaughtering Operations NCII, Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCI and Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCIII, Construction Painting NCII, Constructing Painting NCIII, Plumbing NCI, Plumbing NCIII, Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCI, Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIII, and Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIV:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves and promulgate the aforementioned Training Regulations.

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and Training Regulations (TR) be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 26th day of October 2006.

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–Jan 12 & 13, 2007)

Fil-Estate to spend P2.5B for housing projects this year

PROPERTY FIRM FIL-ESTATE LAND SAID IT had set aside P2.5 billion for high-end and middle-income housing projects this year.

Company chair Robert John Sobrepeña yesterday said Fil-Estate would launch this year several projects that would put to use the company's 3,000-hectare land holding.

These projects include Twin Lakes, envisioned as a leisure community, tourism and retirement village in Laurel Batangas; the 1,269-hectare Nasugbu Harbor Town also in Batangas; a condotel at its Renaissance complex in Ortigas, and the next phase of its Manila Southwoods project.

Fil-Estate, which claimed to be debt-free now, said it was also scheduled to complete this year its condotels at the Fairways & Blue Waters in Boracay. It is also planning to develop a second hotel in Camp John Hay in Baguio. In Iloilo, Fil-Estate plans to build a residential and golf estate in Sta. Barbara town.

In the meantime, the company yesterday approved a plan to raise its authorized capital to P5 billion, from P2.8 billion, to cover for future stock issuances to possible investors.

Last October, the company said foreign real-estate funds Lim Asia Alternative Real Estate Fund and Lim Asia Arbitrage Fund have agreed to buy P80 million worth of Fil-Estate Land stocks. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

RP racked up ...

From page B1

49.03 against the US dollar.

Tetangco said a string of positive factors attracted the heavier foreign portfolio inflows to the country.

"Sound economic fundamentals, particularly decelerating inflation, continuously improving fiscal position, GDP (gross domestic product) growth and positive external position despite loan prepayments, robust corporate earnings results, outlook upgrades in the country's credit rating and economic growth ... contributed to this impressive performance," Tetangco said.

Two large initial public offerings and a number of follow-on offerings at the stock market also perked up portfolio inflows, the BSP chief added.

As of the second week of December, there were at least $320 million in foreign flows from the initial public offering of PNOC Energy Development Corp., the largest IPO in the Philippines since oil refiner Petron Corp. went public in 1994.

Tetangco reported that about 72 percent of gross portfolio inflows amounting to $5.7 billion went to shares of stock listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange. The hottest picks cited were telecommunications and property firms, banks, utilities and holding firms.

Investments in peso-denominated government securities, mostly Fixed Rate Treasury Notes, or FXTNs, amounted to $2.22 billion, or 28 percent of total. Investments in money market instruments and peso bank deposits accounted for the rest.

Based on the BSP report, 80 percent of the portfolio inflows originated from the United States, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, gross capital outflows last year rose by 58 percent to $5.37 billion due mainly to portfolio divestments which, in turn, was attributed to profit-taking brought on by the peso's sharp appreciation, Tetangco said.

He also reported that the country captured $1.96 billion in net foreign direct investments in the first 10 months, up by 75 percent over the same period last year.

FDI inflows for October alone amounted to $304 million, more than twice the level recorded a year ago.

Unlike portfolio investments which are more volatile, FDI flows represent investments in brick-and-mortar businesses that are capital- and labor-intensive, such as those spent in building new factories, power plants, mining ventures and other enterprises. They are considered the least volatile form of financial flows.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 11, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7	7	7	7	30,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	45	45	45	45	516,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	66	66.5	65.5	66	987,300
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	4,150
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	380,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	79.5	80	79.5	80	2,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	52	52.5	51.5	52	4,616,700
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	1,000
Philippine National Bank	47	47	46	46	13,000
Phil. Savings Bank	48	48	48	48	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	27	29	27	28.5	381,200
Security Bank Corp.	65.5	66.5	65.5	66.5	63,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	49	49	49	49	100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.9	282,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1615	1615	1605	1615	1,750
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	126,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	290	290	290	290	2,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1970	1970	1970	1970	350
Ivantage Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	974,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
Pnoc Energy Dev. Corp.	4.55	4.7	4.55	4.65	31,751,000
First Gen Corp.	54	54	53	53	206,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp	68	69.5	68	69.5	1,033,700
Manila Electric Co. A	55.5	56	55.5	55.5	268,300
Manila Electric Co. B	56	56	55	55.5	985,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9	9	8.8	8.9	2,616,000
Petron Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.1	1,011,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	150,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	164,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	295,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	15,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42.5	42.5	42.5	42.5	636,200
Rfm Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.16	1.18	1,943,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	120,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.37	390,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63	63.5	62,400
San Miguel Corp. B	74	76	74	75.5	219,700
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.12	2.08	2.08	1,221,000
Universal Robina Corp	19	19.25	19	19.25	523,800
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.14	24,292,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.9	3.95	3.75	3.75	1,634,000
Holcim Phulippines Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.9	2,292,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	2,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	317,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies, Inc	5.5	5.9	5.4	5.7	14,550,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.77	0.79	0.75	0.76	129,150,000
Picop Resources Inc	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.215	4,540,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.0095	0.01	478,100,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.012	0.01	0.01	138,100,000
Ayala Corp.	545	545	545	545	459,120
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.65	230,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	7.8	8.4	7.8	8.3	2,155,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc	0.06	0.075	0.06	0.07	243,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.9	2.95	2.85	2.85	130,000
Apc Group Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	8,580,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	52,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	480,000
Atn Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.8	1.8	68,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	87,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	3,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	32,000
Benpres Holdings Corp	2.65	2.85	2.55	2.65	29,800,000
Dmci Holdings Inc	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6	342,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.7	0.75	0.7	0.75	40,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	1,545,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.99	1	0.99	1	80,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	540,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.1	2.14	2.08	2.08	1,541,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc	10.75	11.5	10.75	11.5	1,569,900
Keppel Holdings	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	100,000
Medco Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	320,000
Magnum Holdings, Inc	5.1	5.3	4.55	4.55	4,300,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2	2.04	1.9	1.9	19,184,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.022	0.02	0.022	32,900,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.205	1,570,000
Prime Media Holdings, Inc	1	1	1	1	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	450,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	28,260,000
SM Investments Corp.	312.5	312.5	307.5	307.5	106,840
South China Resources Inc	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	109,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	14,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	8,990,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	110,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc	15.75	15.75	15.25	15.5	2,184,100
Belle Corp.	1.18	1.28	1.18	1.24	12,332,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.68	1.72	1.68	1.68	1,689,000
Cityland Development Corp	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	100,000
Crown Equities Inc	0.51	0.52	0.49	0.49	7,560,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.15	1,464,000
C & P Homes Inc	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.44	293,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	620,000
Eib Realty Developers Inc	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	40,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.62	0.64	0.62	0.63	25,610,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	954,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.065	0.06	0.065	3,400,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.72	38,813,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	20,000
Interport Res.	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	31,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	24,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	108,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.5	0.54	0.5	0.54	33,620,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc	0.78	0.86	0.78	0.84	33,190,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.38	2.4	44,947,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.3	5.5	5.3	5.5	402,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	940,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	200,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15	15.25	15	15.25	11,252,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.71	0.72	0.69	0.69	14,030,000
SM Development Corp.	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.2	10,716,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	11	11.25	1,442,900
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	110,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.105	270,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	19.25	19.25	19	19	70,200
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	2	2.04	2	2	11,996,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1200	1210	1190	1195	154,520
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.3	6.4	5,194,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2440	2440	2400	2400	60,060
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	6,430,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	144,100,000
Ionics Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.46	2.48	734,000
Ipvg Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	113,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.34	1.42	1.34	1.42	320,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.8	2.8	2.46	2.65	3,714,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.034	0.032	0.034	99,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.05	139,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.82	1.88	1.82	1.84	1,073,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	22.25	24.25	22.25	24	1,509,000
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	190,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.08	2.08	1,899,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	320,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.59	1,270,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.14	2.08	2.12	249,000
Paxys Inc.	19	19.25	19	19.25	51,100
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	334,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	1,088,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	336,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.9	9	8.8	8.9	965,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	15,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	6,220,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	2,770,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	363,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	46,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	232,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.8	3.8	6,228,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17	17	16.25	16.25	212,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.71	0.65	0.69	6,330,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.42	711,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	77,300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	12,600,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	220,000
Pnoc Exploration Corp.-B	17.25	17.25	17	17	7,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.9	10.25	9.9	10	475,000

CURRENCIES

January 11, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.772977	1.000000	48.8340
Japan	Yen	0.006461	0.008358	0.4082
United Kingdom	Pound	1.493468	1.932100	94.3522
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099123	0.128236	6.2623
Switzerland	Franc	0.620068	0.802182	39.1738
Canada	Dollar	0.657573	0.850702	41.5432
Singapore	Dollar	0.503240	0.651042	31.7930
Australia	Dollar	0.600230	0.776518	37.9205
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.050282	2.652450	129.5297
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206100	0.266631	13.0207
Brunei	Dollar	0.501607	0.648929	31.6898
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021561	0.027894	1.3622
Uae	Dirham	0.210465	0.272279	13.2965
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.293700	63.1765
Korea	Won	0.000825	0.001067	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099010	0.128089	6.2551
Argentina	Peso	0.250722	0.324359	15.8397
Brazil	Real	0.358840	0.464231	22.6703
Denmark	Kroner	0.134197	0.173611	8.4781
India	Rupee	0.017394	0.022502	1.0989
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219971	0.284576	13.8970
Mexico	New Peso	0.070485	0.091187	4.4530
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531109	0.687096	33.5536
South Africa	Rand	0.105630	0.136653	6.6733
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023617	0.030553	1.4920

Source: REUTERS' FOREX CLOSING PRICES as of NY Time- Jan. 10, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time Closing Rate as of Jan. 10, 2007

Vehicle sales up 2.6%

Demand for commercial units still up

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL VEHICLE ASSEMBLERS REPORTED A 2.6-percent increase in sales in 2006 at 99,541 units.

The figure, however, was 459 units shy of the 100,000-unit confidence mark that assemblers believed was an indication of sustained growth.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (Campi) and Truck Manufacturers Association said they expected to hurdle this year the threshold for the first time since the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998. They are projecting total sales of 103,000 units this year.

Campi president Elizabeth H. Lee said the issues that impede a faster rate of growth for the industry still abound, including the need to implement the ban on used vehicle importation as spelled out in a recent Supreme Court decision.

Lee said Campi and TMA were also concerned that plans to rationalize the government's incentives program might adversely affect their businesses.

"We are also taking steps to address the need for a grace period before the planned implementation of the stricter Euro 2 emissions standards," she said.

Lee said that a transition was needed for purposes of planning firms' inventories, the introduction of new models and other matters related to vehicle production and supply management.

Should the fundamentals remain strong, meaning the strengthening of peso against the US dollar and the yen (for Japanese makes), a more robust growth by major industry players can be expected, she said.

"The increase in commercial vehicle sales—cornering about 60 percent of total sales in 2006—is seen to continue this year," she said.

Toyota Motor Philippines continued to dominate the market, followed by Honda Cars Philippines, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines and Isuzu Philippines.

In the meantime, Hyundai Asia Resources, the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the country, said in a statement that it was able to corner 5.5 percent of the local vehicle market last year, making it the fifth biggest seller during the period.

Hari said the Starex was the No.1 van in the country, with a market share of 28 percent, while the Tucson ranked third in the compact SUV segment with a 4.7-percent share. In the passenger car segment, Hyundai finished fourth with a market share of 5.3 percent.

Start-up firm plans to raise funds via stock market

By Christine A. Gaylican

A NEW COMPANY PUTTING UP SUGAR mills and ethanol refineries in Zamboanga del Norte and Palawan, which were estimated to cost about P3.8 billion, is planning to tap the stock market to raise funds for its projects.

Zambo Norte BioEnergy Corp. president Jose Reyes Jr. said the company would either hold an initial public offering in June or opt for a backdoor listing.

Reyes said Zambo Norte's plan to put up a sugar mill and ethanol refinery in Zamboanga del Norte was estimated to cost P1.8 billion. The facility planned for Palawan will cost another P2 billion, he said.

"We may enter into a joint venture agreement with an existing listed company engaged in sugar production," he said.

The company has tapped BDO Capital and Investment Corp. to be the lead underwriter for a potential public offering and Camba, Reyes and Partners Inc. as financial adviser.

Zambo Norte is a project development company engaged in "greenfield" sugarcane farm and ethanol refinery projects. It is controlled by a leading sugar conglomerate and ZN BioFuels Partners Inc., a consortium of petroleum, sugar industry and investment banking experts, he said.

Zambo Norte recently signed a contract with Beijing-based China CAMC Engineering Co. Ltd. for the construction of the integrated complex that would include a sugar mill, a six-megawatt power plant and an ethanol refinery with a capacity of 45 million liters a year. The Chinese firm will prepare the engineering plan and design of the facility, as well as supply the machinery, plant and farm equity required.

Reyes said the company would be ready with its sugar nurseries in the first quarter and start the construction of the sugar mills in the fourth quarter.

Asean seen worse than WTO

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

"IN MANY WAYS, THE ASEAN IS WORSE than the WTO," said Arsenio Tanchuling on the first day of the ongoing Asean Summit in Cebu. Tanchuling is head of Seafish, or Southeast Asia Fishers for Justice, composed of 14 organizations from five countries where small fishers are threatened with too rapid liberalization. These countries are Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Philippines.

COMMENTARY

Counting the ways

While the Asean has many aspects that are better than the WTO, Tanchuling has valid grievances, revolving mostly around the concept of 'special and differential treatment' enshrined in the WTO charter. This means that the unique needs of countries not yet ready for liberalization should be recognized, and tariff rates adjusted accordingly.

In the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting in 2005, Tanchuling worked closely with Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban and Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano in successfuliy enshrining two critical categories in the WTO declaration—the Special Products and Special Safeguard Measures. These allow a country to make use of unique mechanisms for products not yet ready for rapid liberalization. These are not present in the Asean, and should accordingly be adopted.

Secondly, where WTO aims for a complete liberalization by 2020 for developing countries, the Asean target date for the the original Asean members has been accelerated from 2015 to 2010. So far, the Asean trade liberalization has been more negative than positive for the Philippines. We now import more from than we export to seven out of nine Asean partners.

More flexibilities

While it is correct to have an earlier liberalization target date among Asean members, increased flexibility should be allowed to accommodate unique country needs.

Glenn Ymata, Seafish campaign officer, says: "In WTO, 5-10 percent of tariff lines in the grouping that affects fisheries is planned to be exempted from the standard liberalization formula. There is no such flexibility for Asean fisheries. Furthermore, in the WTO, the average tariff rates are given for groups of products. Therefore, a country can vary tariff rates to accommodate unique needs so long as the average is met. Again, the Asean does not have this, because each tariff rate is fixed."

Ymata was a leader in the fluvial demonstration in Hong Kong, where two Seafish boats were accompanied by four boats of the Hong Kong government. This was to demonstrate the special and differential treatment needed for fisheries. Ymata is currently engaged in similar activities during the Asean Summit.

Gregorio San Diego, Philippine representative and former president of the Asean Federation of Poultry Raisers, adds: "Even the consultation process for WTO was far better than for Asean. For WTO, we participated actively in the DA's Task Force Waar (WTO Agreement on Agriculture Renegotiation). Five of our Alyansa Agrikultura leaders were part of the official delegation to the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting. For the Asean, we were given no such participatory role. This should also be changed."

Concepcion initiative

Thankfully, farmers and fisherfolk will be allowed some participation in the Asean Summit, thanks to Jose Concepcion Jr., who is the Asean Business Advisory Council (Abac) chair this year. He has instituted an innovation by extending the normal Abac meeting to include a special session on hearing the views of farmers, fisherfolk and laborers.

While we await the Asean leaders' response for the recommended Asean Civil Society Advisory Council, farmers and fisherfolk leaders will give their views tomorrow during the Abac special session on "Enhancing Social Harmony on the Regional Economic Integration Process."

Recommendation

It is suggested that our government leaders support the institutionalization of civil society participation in the Asean. They should also work for an Asean that puts people above profits, implements selective trade liberalization, and surpasses WTO in following the principle drafted by the Alyansa Agrikultura and agreed upon by NGO representatives from 10 Asian countries during a trade conference in New Delhi: "Trade should be in the service of sustainable development. This development should reflect equity, address environmental concerns, and meet human development needs. If a trade arrangement is detrimental to this development, the country must reject it."

In building a "caring and sharing Asean," more attention should be given to matters other than trade, such as a regional plan for sustainable fisheries development, a program to address global warming, an initiative for Asean women empowerment, and an awareness and pride in Asean's rich historical and cultural heritage. Only then will Asean not be worse than WTO, and better for our country.

(The author is Agriwatch chair; former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112)

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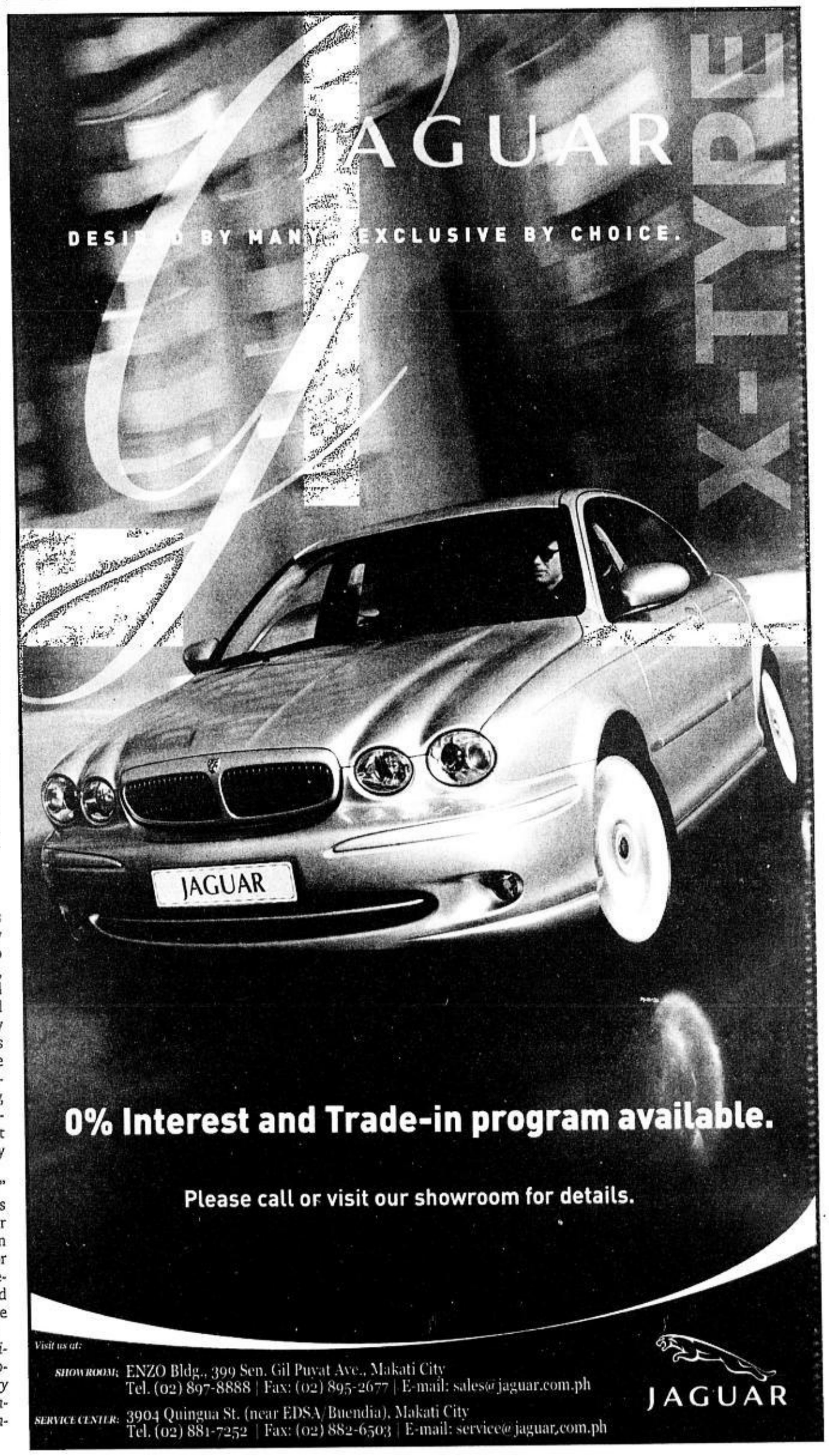

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BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Consumers now more powerful than marketers

Buyers' words are trusted more than the marketing lines

By Amy R. Remo

A BRAND GURU ONCE SAID, "Products are created in factories; brands are created in the minds."

But at this age of digital convergence and cyberspace where the Internet- and tech-savvy are at the vanguard, a slow yet powerful shift is being seen.

"Brands are now starting to be created online," says Simon Bond, international clients and regional business development director for Proximity Worldwide in the Asia Pacific.

Proximity Worldwide is BBDO Worldwide's subsidiary marketing services network offering below-the-line disciplines including direct, digital, sales promotion and event marketing.

Proximity has offices in eight countries in Asia including the Philippines. Its clients include Pepsi, Masterfoods, Visa, Mitsubishi, FedEx and Tiger Beer.

"Brands are starting to realize that the most powerful selling of products and ideas takes place not from marketer to consumer but from consumer to consumer," explains Bond. "And in this digital age, various Internet tools are readily available for one's use for such an activity."

Consumers are now empowered via blogs or online diaries, personal websites (myspace.com), gaming, chatrooms, moblogs or video (youtube.com) websites, photo (flickr.com) websites , podcasts, and virtual shops (eBay).

According to him, this "bottom-up" approach respects the fact that the consumers are now in control and their word is a lot more powerful and trusted than brands.

In fact, consumers nowadays prefer to consult photo/personal/moblogs for "real" experiences of "real people" before buying a product, availing a service or traveling to a country.

"With the proliferation of these tools readily available for the simple consumer, one now has a stronger voice and can reach thousands of other fellow consumers," says Bond. "You can inform, influence or do just about anything online."

Bond adds that people are naturally creative, and at this digital age, "creativity is about to be unleashed like never before since we now have the hardware, the software, the skills, and—via new distribution channels—an audience."

A research shows that in 2005, a person spends an average of 2.7 hours a day surfing the Internet, which comprises 39 percent of a person's total average hours of daily media exposure. It comes second to television at 40 percent.

BOND

"This phenomenon has seen the rise of a new generation called Generation C where 'C' stands for content," Bond explains. "This captures the avalanche of consumer-generated content that is building on the Web from text to images and from audio to video."

"You can now create your own 'Youniverse'. Hanging out online is the new way of living," adds Bond.

Consumers are now more involved in controlling communications, thanks to the rise of digital media such as chatrooms, forums, instant messaging, blogs and social networks, enabling messages to spread faster and more exponentially.

Digital media's capabilities to "turbocharge" the spread of information means that well-planned and well-executed marketing initiatives can help business messages reach the mass market.

Before, it would have required a significant investment if left to the more traditional techniques.

Embracing the shift

In a recent visit, Bond conducted a workshop to explain how brands can embrace this new shift in consumer power and the trend toward user-generated content.

"We are exposed to over 3,000 advertising messages per day. Packaging, billboards, branded clothes, signages, food sampling, TV ads, interruptive online ads, unsolicited mobile messages—our every sense is assaulted constantly by overt and covert marketing messages delivered by a plethora of media channels," says Bond.

The workshop aims to emulate how consumers are creating content using these new technology platforms and seeks to highlight how brands can truly utilize these new platforms to reach out to their consumers and create highly engaging campaigns.

A number of brands according to Bond, has successfully adapted to this growing trend.

Philips Norelco Bodygroom's shaveeverywhere.com sparked curiosity and was able to effectively interact with its consumers.

Coke Studio's www.mycoke.com gathered eight million subscribers while Habbo Hotel's website, equipped with teen chat in a 3D environment with avatars, gathered 50 million subscribers.

Another popular website is SecondLife.com, which is a 3D virtual world entirely built and owned by Internet users. Since it was launched in 2003, SecondLife enjoys a loyal following of more than 2.3 million participants.

"The virtual world is becoming more appealing to the mass consumer," says Bond.

Indeed, it's becoming even harder to ignore the growing prevalence of the Internet and the tools available for consumers. Brands can utilize these tools to get their business messages across seamlessly and more effectively.

For example, brands can now become a seamless part of the gaming experience by embedding themselves within the game. Domino Pizza, for instance, has already integrated a delivery service into the actual gaming experience of EverQuest.

"This is a very powerful format as it acts as subliminal marketing message as is does not interrupt the gamers' entertainment," says Bond.

According to Bond, the advertising market is roughly worth $600 billion to date. But currently, only $150 million is invested in gaming and that's less than 0,00025 percent.

"There's so much potential left to be tapped, so many Internet tools available that it's a matter of choosing the best and most effective one for your product or service," says Bond.

Hyundai rises to No. 5 spot

HYUNDAI ASIA RESOURCES Inc. (HARI), the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines, lashed the local Top 5 position with a market share of 5.5 percent, based on the Campi sales report from January to December 2006.

From its sixth position in 2005, with a market share of 5.1 percent, HARI rose a notch higher in 2006 due to the impressive performance of its profile models in various segments.

The Hyundai Starex is still the No. 1 van in the Philippines with a market share of 28 percent, followed by the runaway winner of the JD Powers & Associates IQS, the Hyundai Tucson, now ranking 3rd in the compact SUV segment with 14.7-percent market share. Not far behind is Hyundai's primer for new age engineering and design, the Santa Fe. Launched only in May 2006, the Santa Fe has already gained a considerable footing in the mid-size SUV category with a 3.3-percent market share. In the passenger car segment, piloted by the 2006 Subcompact of the Year, Getz, and the fuel-efficient Accent, Hyundai finished 4th with a market share of 5.3 percent.

2006 was yet another record-setting year for Hyundai Motor Co. as worldwide sales reached 2,663,998 units, a 5.1-percent increase over 2005. Overseas sales, comprised of exports from Hyundai's three Korean plants and output of overseas manufacturing subsidiaries, rose by 6.1 percent to 2,082,906 units while domestic sales rose 1.8 percent to 581,092 units.

Atlas Copco receives Salambao Award

ATLAS PHILIPPINES INC., THE leading provider of industrial productivity solutions, was awarded its third Salambao Award for Excellence in Business (Macro Enterprise Division) by the Parañaque City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PqCCI) during the recently concluded 6th Salambao Awards at the Bellevue Hotel in Alabang.

The awards, a project of the PqCCI has been in existence since 1999. It is an annual search for the city's most outstanding business enterprises.

The "salambao" is an indigenous Filipino fishing craft, which once dominated the Parañaque skyline. Basically a raft with a net that hung like a giant sieve from two towering bamboo poles, it ruled the estuaries of Manila Bay when Parañaque was still a rustic fishing village.

The qualities that made the salambao so valuable in the past continue to be the hallmark of success for modern business.

Awards were given to large and medium companies and small enterprise which met the criteria covering the areas of leadership and strategic planning, customer and market focus, human resource focus, and contribution to local tax generation categories.

The award, Atlas Copco's third consecutive, elevated the premier company into the Salambao Hall of Fame.

Atlas Copco Philippines Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Atlas Copco AB of Sweden. It was established in 1967.

It generated P1 billion in revenues this year.

Super Bowl of China expands

SUPER BOWL OF CHINA ENDS 2006 with three new restaurants in the metropolis—SM City Valenzuela, Roxas Boulevard corner United Nations Avenue and at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

The expansion plans will continue in 2007 as Big Buddha Restaurant Inc. (BBRI), owner and operator of Super Bowl of China and Big Buddha Restaurant in Greenbelt 3, is bullish about the economy and the restaurant industry.

BBRI has plans of opening at least five or more outlets in 2007—SM Pampanga in the first quarter will be its first branch outside Metro Manila and in Trinoma in Edsa, in the second quarter of 2007.

Super Bowl's aggressive marketing efforts in 2006 were instrumental in its continuous success.

The strategies implemented were aimed at providing added value for money to stretch the purchasing power of its customers. Notable among these were the Super Combo Meals and Group Coupon Offers.

The Super Delivery with hotline number 737-8888 is also doing very well owing to the fact that the food is delivered fresh and hot in mechanically sealed and hygienic containers, making it easy for customers to enjoy good Chinese food anytime during the day. The restaurant also offers catering services with hotline number 7472845.

FCDU Taxation: Revisited - Part II

TAX-FILES

By Czarina R. Miranda and Jose A. Osana
SGV & Co

INTERESTINGLY, THE BIR, IMplemented the provisions of the tax laws on FCDUs with more contrasts.

Before 1998, the BIR issued Revenue Regulations No. 10-76 dated Dec. 14, 1976, which outlined the taxation of FCDUs:

1. Offshore income, defined as income from foreign currency transactions with non-residents, OBUs in the Philippines and other depository banks under the expanded foreign currency deposit system shall be subject to a 5-percent tax.

2. Onshore income, defined as interest income from foreign currency loans granted to residents (other than OBUs in the Philippines or other depository banks under the expanded system) shall be subject to a 10-percent final withholding tax.

3. Income not classified either as offshore income or onshore income shall be subject to the usual or normal corporate income tax (then 35 percent) imposed under the Tax Code.

RR No. 10-76 clarified that the income tax imposed on the offshore and onshore income of FCDUs will be in lieu of all other taxes such as, but not limited to, privilege tax, gross receipts tax, documentary and science stamp tax and profit remittance tax. Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1773 dated Jan. 16, 1981 modified the taxation of FCDUs by removing the 5-percent tax on offshore income and declaring the same exempt from all taxes.

With respect to other loan-related income, which are not in the nature of interest, but are considered part of the loan transaction, these were treated as exempt from the 10-percent FWT in accordance with RR No. 14-77, which provides that "in the case of gross onshore income x x x, the tax shall be 10 percent thereof and shall be a final tax. Any and all fees, commission and other charges which are integral to the charges imposed on foreign currency loan transactions are exempt from the tax herein."

The BIR, in its Revenue Audit Memorandum Order (RAMO) No. 1-84, clarified that the exclusion from gross onshore income (which is subject to the 10 percent final withholding tax) of the said "fees, commissions, and other charges which are integral parts of the interest income" derived by an FCDU from foreign currency loan transactions does not justify their treatment as subject to the normal income tax on net income.

With the passage, however, of the TRA of 1997, which became effective in Jan. 1, 1998, the BIR, in its RR 10-98, clarified that the income of FCDUs which are subject to 10 percent tax will also include interest income from lending operations, including bank charges, commissions, service fees, and net foreign exchange transaction gains. Accordingly, interest and non-interest income (e.g., discounts, commissions, foreign exchange and trading gains, etc.) earned by FCDUs from foreign currency transactions with all residents are subject to 10 percent final tax. Moreover, such income are no longer entitled to exemption from other taxes since the BIR posits that the "in lieu of all other taxes" provision under RR 10-76, has already been revoked.

With the effectivity of RA 9294 on May 21, 2004, the taxability of income, other than interest on loans, earned by FCDUs from residents other than nonresidents, OBUs, local commercial banks, including branches of foreign banks that may be authorized by the BSP to transact business with FCDUs, has not been clarified by the BIR in any revenue regulations or circulars. Considering, however, that RA 9294 is deemed a restoration of the tax exemption privileges of FCDUs prior to 1998, it is logical to assume that the previous tax treatment of such income, has also been restored. Thus, the rules on FCDU taxation, existing prior to 1998, should likewise be applicable.

Recent developments

In an en banc decision (CTA EB No. 113) last Sept. 16, 2006, the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) held that commissions and trading gains earned by an FCDU in 1998 from its buying and selling of foreign exchange from and to resident individuals and corporate clients, other than nonresidents, OBUs, local commercial banks, including branches of foreign banks that may be authorized by the BSP to transact business with FCDUs, are not subject to the 10 percent final tax.

The CTA ruled that RR 10-98, which was issued to implement the provisions of the TRA of 1997 and used as basis by the BIR to support its assessment against the FCDU, expanded the coverage of the Tax Code by imposing the 10 percent final tax on income of FCDU's derived from foreign currency transactions with all residents of the Philippines, individual or corporate. The court held that, since RR No.10-98 not only implemented the Tax Code, but instead modified the law, the portion of the regulations which imposes the 10 percent final tax on the income derived by the FCDU's from foreign currency transactions with all residents of the Philippines is void and has no binding effect. According to the CTA, in view of the provisions of the TRA, the income items subject to 10 percent final tax are the following:

1. Income derived by a domestic or resident foreign corporation which is a depository bank under the expanded foreign currency deposit system from foreign currency transactions with local commercial banks including branches of foreign banks that may be authorized by the BSP to transact business with foreign currency depository system units and other depository banks under the expanded foreign currency deposit system; and

2. Interest income of such depository banks from foreign currency loans granted under the expanded foreign currency deposit system to residents.

Thus, based on this CTA decision, income, other than interest from loans, earned by an FCDU in 1998 from residents, other than OBUs, local commercial banks, including branches of foreign banks authorized by the BSP to transact business with FCDUs, are not covered by the 10 percent tax regime.

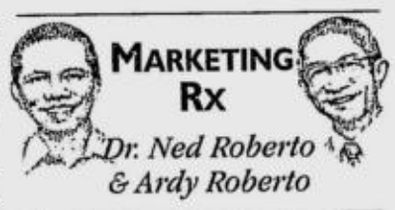
In the same case, the BIR, in an attempt to collect taxes on the commissions and trading gains, sought alternative relief from the CTA by arguing that if these income are not covered by the 10 percent final tax, the same should still be subject to the regular corporate income tax of 34 percent (rate applicable in 1998) because said transactions are indeed taxable. The BIR argues that there is no particular provision of the law which categorically exempts said transactions from tax.

The CTA held that such an alternative relief cannot be allowed as this would constitute a denial of due process for the respondent-taxpayer. Citing the doctrine laid down in Aguinaldo Industries Corp. Fishing Nets Division v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, et al., L-29790, Feb. 25, 1982 (112 SCRA 136), the court ruled that "to allow a litigant to assume a different posture when he comes before the court and challenge the position he had accepted at the administrative level, would be to sanction a procedure whereby the court—which is supposed to review administrative determinations—would not review, but determine and decide for the first time, a question not raised at the administrative forum." Fairness dictates that if the ruling in the above-cited Aguinaldo Industries case applies to taxpayers, the same ruling shall likewise be applied with equal force and effect against the commissioner of Internal Revenue.

Based on the above CTA case, it may be concluded that the BIR has basis in arguing that said income should still be subject to the regular corporate income tax in the absence of law which specifically provides tax-exemption on such transactions. As a cardinal rule in taxation, exemptions are highly disfavored and whoever claims an exemption must justify his right by the clearest grant of organic or statute law. Tax exemptions cannot arise by mere implication and any doubt about whether the exemption exists is strictly construed against the taxpayer and in favor of the taxing authority. Thus, had the BIR raised the above arguments when it initially assessed the taxpayer, the outcome of the CTA case may have been different.

It appears, therefore, that the only difference in the tax laws on FCDUs, from the time it was created up to the present, is with respect to the tax treatment of income earned by FCDUs from OBUs, local commercial banks, including branches of foreign banks authorized by the BSP to transact business with FCDUs. Other than this, the tax treatment of FCDU income from residents (other than OBUs, local commercial banks, including branches of foreign banks authorized by the BSP to transact business with FCDUs) and non-residents, as governed by the provisions of the TRA of 1997 (i.e., for the period 1998 to May 20, 2004), are the same as the rules applied under PD 1035, as amended. Such being the case, there is more reason to support a position that the same tax rules will be applicable to FCDU income earned when RA 9294 became effective.

Seven resolutions for marketers in 2007



BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS column, you (like millions of other people across the globe) would have made a handful of New Year's resolutions.

Here are seven suggested resolutions that marketers can make and KEEP to have a better, more profitable new year in 2007.

As a marketer, why not resolve to ...

1. Start or continue practicing "Truth in Advertising".

Make this one of your core values. Focus on telling the true benefits of your product to build trust with your customers. Quite a number of developers and/or their ad agencies state that their project locations in the Cavite/Laguna/Tagaytay area are a mere "45-60 minutes" drive to Makati. Immediately, this creates disbelief and distrust for those veterans who ply the South 'Suffer' Highway. I personally timed the travel times to several of these projects and it is almost impossible to make it under 60 minutes. Just tell the truth and say something like "average travel time is about an hour or two, depending on traffic conditions, but it's well worth the drive." As BrandChild author Martin Lindstrom says, "to build word of mouth (the best form of advertising), underpromise but overdeliver."

This brings us to a question that a reader asked: "If consumer perception is the primary basis for motivating prospects to buy, then does this mean that truth in advertising is irrelevant in marketing? "

To which we answered: On the contrary. What this means is that marketers ought to be extra careful in their use of consumer perception to motivate consumers via their advertising. As a marketer you can use consumer perceptions for a good purpose or for a bad one. Truth in advertising is a good purpose. Deception is bad and if you get away with it at first, it won't last. Consumers will, sooner or later, find out how you've been fooling them. Abe Lincoln has been, is, and will be right: "You can fool some of the people some of the time. But you can't fool all of the people all the time." (Read Seth Godin's book, All Marketers Are Liars: The Power of Telling Authentic Stories .)

Deception of course includes cases of keeping quiet about what you know may harm consumers. That's withholding of a "truth." Take the case of Merck's Vioxx, the acute painkiller and anti-arthritis medication, that had to be withdrawn from the market because Merck or more precisely its medical researchers withheld from publication in the New England Journal of Medicine knowledge of three heart attacks among Vioxx's patients participating in the large scale clinical study of Vioxx.

The heart attacks took place in the final five weeks of the trial study. The patients who had the heart attack were supposedly at low risk for heart problems. But this was not the only thing the Merck researchers withheld. The study had apparently found "more cardiovascular problems potentially connected to Vioxx." These problems were not reported in the published study. They should have been since in medical science and research, such withholding is highly unethical and a serious breach of the Hippocratic oath.

In pharmaceutical marketing, published clinical studies are a powerful "advertising" material for persuading doctors. So that withholding of the three heart attacks and the connection to more cardiovascular problems was also a truth in advertising infraction.

2. Grow bigger by going after "smaller" markets.

Today, market niches are all around you ... even in the mass market. Look at Unilever's deodorant brand, "Axe." This brand successfully made sales and profit by nicheing into the population of young men, not all of them, but only those young men who are "after a deep relationship with a girl." That's a niche, a small population size. But their usage frequency is high and willing to pay a premium for a deodorant specifically tailored to their needs. We understand from our Unilever friends that it is now the main contributor to the more than 10 percent growth in the company's participation in the deodorant category! There's a local equivalent (though in a different category) to Axe. That's Eskinol's "Master", the Eskinol for a special niche of young men.

The extreme in market nicheing is in real property marketing. Look at Ayala Land. Its initial target market was the niche of all niches: the very few and countable Class AAA consumers. Yet selling to this niche, say, a less than 100-unit-condo project gave Ayala Land billions in revenue. The magnitude of the marketing task (MMT), another marketing concept worth your mastering, is accountable and manageable.

3. Focus!

It was a joy to host marketing legend Al Ries and his daughter/partner, Laura Ries, last June 2006. One of the most memorable pieces of advice that they gave was to focus.

Al Ries' advice on choosing what to focus on is that "First, you want to be first in a category. Remember, not just first in manufacturing the product, but first in the mind of the customer. It doesn't matter if a hundred of people are producing it already, if you are first in mind you will generally win. Second, you want to bet on the future. Pick ideas or concepts that fit in with future trends. In food, for example, you might want to focus on low-calorie products. In clothing, you maybe want to focus on the younger generation, because they buy more and will be around longer. Third, you want to be the opposite of the leader. If the leader is Coke and focused on the older generation, then Pepsi should focus on the younger generation. If the leader is McDonald's and focused on kids, then Burger King should focus on adults, or grown-up kids."

4. Put effort into internal marketing.

We hate to sound like a broken record, but this resolution is one of the most favorite ones to be broken every year. Before you market and sell to the world, make sure you've sold yourselves and the other departments/teams in your company on your product and its marketing plan.

Marketing to the target market and consumer segment is what gets formally planned. That marketing is what has come to be called "external marketing." But every company has its "internal customers." These are the people in the marketing and sales department, and those in the other departments including especially, manufacturing, supply chain, finance, and human resources. To win their support, these "customers" need to be sold to the company's product and marketing plan. They must buy in if the external customers are to likewise buy and if the marketing plan is to gain the support it needs from them. This is marketing to the internal customers. It's "internal marketing." If it is to succeed, it needs the same kind of formal planning, implementing, monitoring and control that we routinely give to external marketing.

We'll be back next week for the next three resolutions that marketers need to make.

The INQUIRER and Microsoft sponsors Dr Ned's upcoming "Marketing for Non Marketers" this coming Jan. 25-26. For inquiries, please call Fina or Juliet at 813-2732/03. Send questions to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless!

Remote city pins hopes on Olympics

CHIFENG, CHINA—TO THE CASUAL observer Chifeng—with its smoke stacks, crumbling apartment blocks and decrepit factories—is just another industrial town trying to find its way in China's uncertain transition to a market economy.

The city, typical of many poor and polluted inland cities in China, is an unlikely setting for a potential tourist hotspot.

But all that could change come the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, for Chifeng has been put on a list of tourist sites recommended by the Olympic Games organizing committee.

Chifeng bills itself as the closest place from Beijing to experience the Inner Mongolian grasslands, where Genghis Khan's warriors roamed centuries ago and where his descendents still live.

The local government has high hopes the Olympic Games will draw foreign tourists to the city, creating jobs and easing the pain of unemployment caused by the closure or privatization of the factories that used to be the city's economic mainstay.

"If we can get more visitors here on the tails of the Olympics, that's great," said Li Shuqing, 50, a laid-off worker who opened his own restaurant four years ago.

"For too long Chifeng has been remote, so I hope that we can be more connected to the outside world," Li added. "Maybe we can even get some foreign investment." Yet Chifeng, referred to on its Chinese language travel Web site (www.cfly.net) as a "flourishing, outstanding tourist city" and a "tourist Mecca" may find it hard to attract large numbers of tourists.

The city has been judged so unworthy of tourism that English-language guidebooks, including the iconic Lonely Planet, make not even a passing mention of it.

CHIFENG, typical of many poor and polluted inland cities in China, is an unlikely setting for a potential tourist hotspot. But all that could change come the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. REUTERS

Indeed, foreign visitors are such an oddity that people stop to stare at them in the street.

"Why on earth would a foreigner want to come here?" said ethnic Mongolian Bataar as he smoked outside Chifeng's train station, built in a socialist-architectural style that was once considered de rigueur by Communist planners.

"There's nothing to see in Chifeng."

Building boom

Signs that the government has been spending like crazy to prepare for a possible tourist influx are everywhere.

A huge new administrative hub, complete with Chifeng's first five-star hotel, rises out of the fields on the outskirts. In the main town, old buildings are being torn down, roads repaved and street lighting improved.

Yet Chifeng may face an image problem.

It is home to a jail identified by Amnesty International as a place where torture takes place—a prison that houses political detainees like ethnic Mongolian academic Hada, serving 15 years for separatism.

And although the military presence is not obvious downtown, an air base lies on the city's outskirts.

Despite being situated relatively close, around 500 or so kilometers (310 miles) northeast of Beijing, communications are inconvenient, though a new highway has cut in half driving time to the capital.

But the fastest train to Beijing still takes about 10 hours.

Chifeng's quaint, 1950s-era airport is so small that the baggage reclaim area is a raised counter next to two check-in desks. The tarmac can hold just two aircraft—and small regional jets at that. There are no announcements in English.

Limited sights

Visitors who arrive a little early for one of the three daily flights will find that most lights are turned off, including those in the control tower.

To be fair, many of Chifeng's tourist attractions lie outside the city, in the grasslands and mountains.

Chifeng, whose population of about five million exceeds that of New Zealand, was once the capital of the Liao Dynasty, established by the nomadic Khitan people in 907.

Little remains of that history. There is a 400-year-old mosque and a renovated temple sits incongruously surrounded by mounds of coal and dilapidated housing with broken windows.

Taxi drivers look amazed at being asked to go to the Nanshan Ecological Park, supposedly a top city attraction.

"Really, there's nothing there," said Li Bin.

He doubts the city will benefit from the Olympic Games.

"Maybe people will stop off here on the way to the grasslands, but they won't be very impressed by Chifeng".

At another tourist site, the Red Mountains or Hong Shan, the authorities have done their best to welcome foreigners with an oddly worded English sign explaining the area's sights which apparently include a fossil discovery.

The Chinese sign offers little help in solving the mystery of what the "drugged Hong Shan dinosaur" might have been.

Still, the world's oldest profession seems to have sensed an opportunity in Chifeng from the hoped-for rush of foreigners.

"Have you come on your own?" asked one woman, her face covered by a mask to keep out the pollution and biting winter cold. "Do you want a girl for the night?"

Reuters

Home Depot still needs to learn lessons, critics say

NEW YORK—ROBERT NARDELLI's multimillion-dollar pay as chief of Home Depot Inc. made him, and the retailer, a favorite target of shareholder activists. Now, his exit package is giving critics a new round of ammunition.

Nardelli stepped down from his job as chairman and chief executive last week, walking away with about $210 million in a severance deal -- the equivalent of about $96,000 for every day of his 6-year tenure.

The payout comes on top of earnings of at least $119.2 million in salary and bonus, not including options, that Nardelli, 58, collected as CEO through the end of fiscal 2006.

All the while, Home Depot shares lost nearly 8 percent of their value during Nardelli's tenure.

"He should be giving money back, not taking more money out," said Nell Minow, co-founder of The Corporate Library, a research group that rates companies' governance practices. "Performance has been poor and he has been hugely overpaid every step of the way." Investor activists have a long list of complaints over how Home Depot is run—and they say the board should have cut a much less generous exit deal with Nardelli.

The Atlanta-based company has been under pressure amid weakening sales and profits and it faces a regulatory probe into its stock options award practices. It drew particular wrath last year when board members skipped the 2006 annual meeting amid criticism of Nardelli's compensation.

"The golden parachute he's been given is not acceptable to shareholders," said Richard Ferlauto, director or pension and benefit policy at the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, a union umbrella group that has been critical of executive compensation.

"We will raise concerns with the board of directors, which we think also needs some reform," Ferlauto said.

Janna Sampson, a fund manager at OakBrook Investments said the board likely had little choice but to give Nardelli the large payout—as his severance terms were outlined in his employment agreement. *Reuters*

intel Core 2 Duo inside

Acer recommends Windows® XP Media Center Edition.

Aspire E560C SRP: 59,900 (4,991.67/mo. x 12mos.)
Powered by Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor E6300

• Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor E6300, (1.86GHz/2MB L2 Cache/1066MHz FSB) • Genuine Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition • ATI Radeon® Xpress 1100 Chipset • 1GB DDR2 667MHz RAM/160GB SATA II HDD 7200rpm • Integrated ATI Radeon® X200-based graphics • 16x SuperMulti DVD Dual Layer Drive • Embedded High-Definition Audio with 7.1 channel audio support • 9-in-1 Card Reader (Compact Flash® Type I and Type II, IBM Microdrive, MS, MMC, SD, SM, XD Picture Card, MS-Pro™) • Built-in 10/100/1000 Gigabit Ethernet LAN/Wake-on-Ring ready • 56k ITU v.92 modem • 3.5" 1.44MB FDD • PCI Express™ x16 slot • PCI Express™ x1 slot • 2 x PCI v.2.2 (5 V) slots • Acer 19" LCD Monitor (WideScreen) • External Speakers • with Acer Empowering Technology • USB Keyboard and USB Optical Mouse • One (1) year warranty on parts and labor

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SRP: 39,900 (3,325/mo. x 12mos.)
Powered by Intel® Pentium® D Processor 820 supporting Dual Core Processing
• with Genuine Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition

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Powered by Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 52[illegible]
• with Genuine Microsoft® Windows® XP Starter Edition

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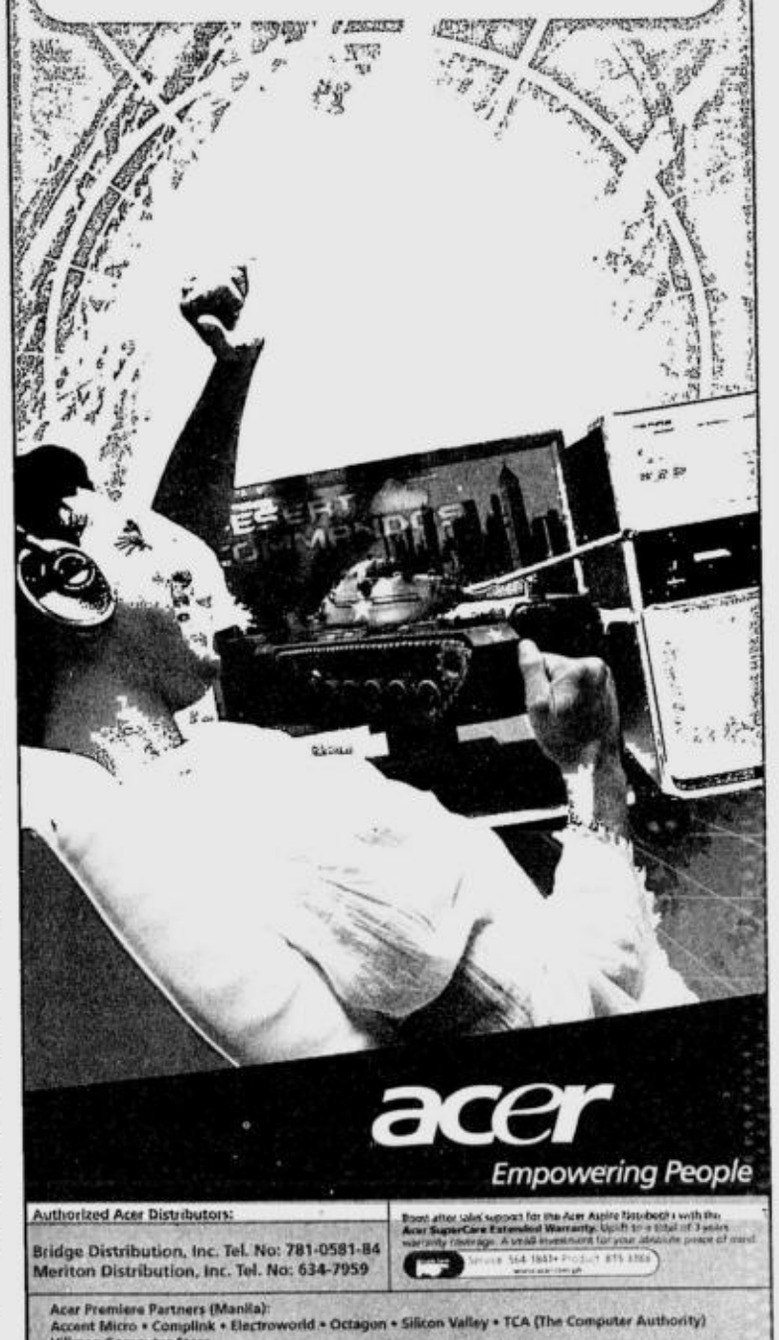

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Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

53rd TESDA Board Meeting
14 December 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City

Resolution No. 2006-28

APPROVING AND PROMULGATING THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR MECHATRONICS SERVICING NCII, MECHATRONICS SERVICING NCIII, MECHATRONICS SERVICING NCIV, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SERVICING NCII, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SERVICING NCIII, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SERVICING NCIV, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SERVICING NCII, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SERVICING NCIII, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SERVICING NCIV, GAS METAL ARC WELDING (GMAW) NCI, GAS METAL ARC WELDING (GMAW) NCII, GAS METAL ARC WELDING (GMAW) NCIII, FLUX-CORED ARC WELDING (FCAW) NCI, FLUX-CORED ARC WELDING (FCAW) NCII, FLUX-CORED ARC WELDING (FCAW) NCIII, GAS TUNGSTEN ARC WELDING (GTAW) NCII, GAS TUNGSTEN ARC WELDING (GTAW) NCIV, SUBMERGED ARC WELDING (SAW) NCI, SUBMERGED ARC WELDING (SAW) NCII, GAS WELDING (OXY-ACETYLENE WELDING) NCI, GAS WELDING (OXY-ACETYLENE WELDING) NCII, BARANGAY HEALTH SERVICES NCII, ICE PLANT REFRIGERATION SERVICING NCIII, AIR DUCT SERVICING NCII AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT SERVICING (MECHANICAL) NCII

WHEREAS, during the 19th, 20th and 21st Standard Setting and Systems Development TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 16 November 2006, 28 November 2006, 12 December 2006 and 47th EXCOM-TESDA Board 30 November 2006 respectively, the following training regulations were deliberated on and favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the TESDA Board;

Information and Communication Technology (Electronics) Sector
1. Mechatronics Servicing NCII
2. Mechatronics Servicing NCIII
3. Mechatronics Servicing NCIV
4. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCII
5. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIII
6. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIV
7. Consumer Electronics Servicing NCII
8. Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIII
9. Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIV

Metals and Engineering (Welding) Sector
10. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCI
11. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCII
12. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCIII

Metals and Engineering (Welding) Sector
13. Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCI
14. Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCII
15. Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCIII
16. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCII
17. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCIV
18. Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCI
19. Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCII
20. Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding) NCI
21. Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding(NCII

Services (Health Sector)
22. Barangay Health Services NCII

Heating, Ventilation Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) Sector
23. Ice Plant Refrigeration Servicing NCIII
24. Air Duct Servicing NCII

Construction Sector
25. Heavy Equipment Servicing (Mechanical) NCII

WHEREAS, the Technical Experts have endorsed for promulgation the aforementioned Training Regulations:

WHEREAS, in the 53rd TESDA Board Meeting held this 14 December 2006, the TESDA Board agreed and approved the Training Regulations for Mechatronics Servicing NCII, Mechatronics Servicing NCIII, Mechatronics Servicing NCIV, Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCII, Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIII, Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIV, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCII, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIII, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCIV, Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCI, Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCII, Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) NCIII, Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCI, Flux-Cored Arc Wedding (FCAW) NCII, Flux-Cored Arc Welding (FCAW) NCIII, Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCII, Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) NCIV, Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCI, Submerged Arc Welding (SAW) NCII, Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding) NCI, Gas Welding (Oxy-Acetylene Welding) NCII, Barangay Health Services NCII, Ice Plant Refrigeration Servicing NCIII, Air Duct Servicing NCII and Heavy Equipment Servicing (Mechanical) NCII:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board approves and promulgate the aforementioned Training Regulations as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and Training Regulations (TRs) be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 14th day of December 2006.

(Sgd.) MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

Resolution No. 2006-29

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR SHIELDED-METAL ARC WELDING (SMAW) NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2004-20 Approving the Adopting the Training Regulations for Welding NCII was promulgated by the TESDA Board during the 44th TESDA Board Meeting which was held last 09 December 2004;

WHEREAS, during the 21st Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 12 December 2006, it was agreed that the Training Regulations for Welding NCII promulgated in Y2004 be amended by deleting the provision for Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW), and adopting the training regulations for Shielded-Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NCII;

WHEREAS, during the 53rd TESDA Board Meeting held on 14 December 2006, the TESDA Board agreed and approved the Training Regulations for Shielded-Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the aforementioned amendments to the training regulations, as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and amended copies of the Training Regulations (TRs) for Shielded-Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) NCII be published and disseminated to all concerned, and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these amended training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 14th day of December 2006.

(Sgd.) MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

Resolution No. 2006-30

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR CONTACT CENTER SERVICES NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2004-01 Approving and Adopting the Training Regulations for the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sector-Contact Center was promulgated by the TESDA Board during the 41st TESDA Board Meeting which was held last 05 February 2004;

WHEREAS, the Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP) has endorsed the revised Training Regulations for the Contact Center Services NCII (Competencies, Training Standards with respect to the Curriculum Design, List of Tools and Equipment, Trainees Entry Requirements, Trainers Qualifications, Assessment and Certification Arrangements, Competency Map and Acknowledgments);

WHEREAS, during the 21st Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 12 December 2006, the amendments to the Training Regulations for Contact Center Services NCII (Training Standards, Assessment and Certification Arrangements, Competency Map, and Acknowledgments) were deliberated on and favorably recommended to the TESDA Board for approval;

WHEREAS, during the 53rd TESDA Board Meeting held on 14 December 2006, TESDA Board agreed and approved the amendments on the Training Regulations for Contact Center Services NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the aforementioned amendments to the training regulations, as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and amended copies of the Training Regulations (TRs) for Contact Center Services NCII be published and disseminated to all concerned, and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these amended training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. There shall be no mandatory national assessment required for graduates of TVET courses covered by this TR. Instead the performance of registered courses under this TR shall be monitored based on the absorption rate or skills utilization rate of their graduates in the Contact Center Industry.

Adopted this 14th day of December 2006.

(Sgd.) MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI – January 10 & 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
QUICK & FAST INT'L. LOGISTICS, INC. Unit 12B, 12F Ramon Magsaysay Ctr. 1680 Roxas Blvd., Manila	Joo Young Lee	Chairman/President
HERTFORD CONSULTING PHILS., INC. U701-702, 7/F 139 Corporate Ctr., 139 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Paul Bernard Chaston	President & Chief Executive Officer
HERTFORD CONSULTING PHILS., INC. U701-702, 7/F 139 Corporate Ctr., 139 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Dg. Rosidah Binti Ghani	Vice President and Treasurer
SMART COMMUNICATIONS, INC. Smart Tower, 6799 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	John Anthony Underwood	Advisor
WEST CONTACT SERVICES, INC. 28/F Export Bank Plaza, Sen. G. Puyat Ave. cor. Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Ernest Duwayne Brooks III	Training Specialist
PHIL. -NEW INDIA LENDING INVESTOR & TRADING CO. 43-A Sibuyan St., Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City	Gurpreet Kaur	Marketing Manager
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	David Gerald Peacock	Senior Piping Engineer/Consultant
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Daniel Coombe	QC/Welding Engineer/Consultant
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Matthew John Ferris	Construction Superintendent/ Consultant
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	John Parkinson	QA/QC Coordinator/Consultant
EQUITY (S.E. ASIA) INC. 27 Don Jose Varella St., Phase 6A, BF Homes, Parañaque City	Robert William Coleclough	Director
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Adrian Charles Perry	Lead Scheduler/ Consultant
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Eric Robertson	Contracts Manager/Consultant
FOSTER WHEELER (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 7/F PDCP Bank Centre, V.A. Rufino St. cor. L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Ian Robert Jones	Inst/Elect Superintendent/ Consultant
KOREAN AIRLINES CO. LTD. G/F, LPL Plaza Bldg., #124 Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sang Cheol Yang Manager	Aircraft Maintenance
THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION LTD. The Enterprise Centre, Tower 1, 6766 Ayala Ave., cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Georgina Wei Li Ho	AVP Consumer Assets Risk Management
CLASSIC CHARACTER INC. (C.C.I.) 10 Felix Baes St., Perpetual Village, East Service Rd., Parañaque City	Sanjeev Kumar Chauhan	VP-Marketing

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Jan. 12, 2007)

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **FIRST GEN HYDRO POWER CORP.** with office address at 3rd Floor, Benpres Building, Exchange Road corner Meralco Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Operator of 112 MW Pantabangan- Masiway Hydro-Electric Power Project under Energy** with project/ plant site located at Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

Industry & Investments Building
385 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Philippines
Tel.: (632) 897-6682; Fax Nos.: 895-3521 (IPG); 895-3981 (IG); 895-3978 (TSG); 890-3051 (AD)
E-mail: OSAC@boi.gov.ph; Homepage: www.boi.gov.ph

(PDI–Jan. 12, 2007)

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.

Subject to the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission ("**SEC**"), the authorized capital stock of Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (the "**Corporation**") has been decreased from ₱6,000,000,000.00 to ₱18,604,000.00. Simultaneous with such decrease and likewise subject to the approval of the SEC, the Corporation's authorized capital stock has also been increased from ₱18,604,000.00 to ₱1,475,000,000.00.

(PDI–Jan. 12, 2007)

BANK ACQUIRED ASSET FOR SALE

Location: Lot 4A & Lot 4B Magsaysay Avenue, Brgy. Singcang-Airport, Bacolod City
TCT Nos.: 300827 & 300826
Description: (2) Vacant Commercial Lots
Total Area: 1,330.00 sqms. more or less
Indicative Selling Price: ₱7,980,000.00

* property is sold on an "as is-where is" basis *
* subject to bank's evaluation and approval *
* subject to change without prior notice to the public *

For inquiries, please call:
UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK
Asset Management and Disposition Division
Hotline No. 8119797

UCPB

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
CENRO-WEST, Lantawan
Pasonanca, Zamboanga City

LEASE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Notice is hereby given that the CENRO-WEST, Lantawan, Pasonanca, Zamboanga City will Lease to the highest bidder at 10:00 A.M. on March 15, 2007, the tract of land covered by Miscellaneous Lease Application No. 097332-21 of Concepcion L. Balaguer.

Location	:	Calarian, Zamboanga City
Description	:	MLI 0973322-000021
Area :		5,390 square meters
Appraised value of the land	:	Php 1,078,000.00
Total appraised value of the property	:	Php 14,552,483.04

All bids must be sealed and submitted to the Office of the CENR-WEST, at Lantawan, Pasonanca, Zamboanga City on or before the hour and date stated above and plainly "Bid for the Land described in MLI 097332-21." Bids must be accompanied with cash money order, treasury warrant, certified check, cashier's check for a sum equivalent to ten percentum (10%) of the bid. When a bid is withdrawn after the highest bidder is determined, the corresponding deposit thereof shall be forfeited to the government. No bid shall be less than the appraised value of the land. This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

(Sgd.) **TITO L. GADON**

(PDI–Dec. 22, 29, 2006; Jan. 5, 12, 19 & 26, 2007)

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Legal Notice
Notice is given that the estate of late Spouses RUFO LIMON, SR. and LEONILA V. LIMON was extrajudicially settled and partitioned among the heirs as per Doc # 86; Page #18, Book IV; Series of 2006 before Notary Public Eden Z. Punsalan of Manila.
(PDI – January 12, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
CEBU PORT AUTHORITY
CIP Complex, Sergeng Osmeña Boulevard, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City
E-mail cpa@cpa.gov.ph
Telephone 232-1461 to 63 • 231-6856 to 57
Fax No 231-6848

AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Provision of the Health Care Management Service for CY 2007 covering all employees (164) and their qualified dependents.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is **TWO MILLION SIX HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND PESOS (P2, 624,000.00)**.

Bidding documents may be purchased from the BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P2,000.00) starting **16 – 22 January 2007.**

Pre-Bid conference shall be held on **26 January 2007**, 2 pm at the CPA Conference Room.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the BAC Secretariat on or before 9 am on **08 February 2007** at the CPA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, CIP Complex, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security. **(Late bids shall not be accepted.)**

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA) reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, or to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **MARIO G. TAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:
(Sgd.) **ANGELO C. VERDAN**
General Manager
(PDI – Jan. 12, 2007)

The Board of Directors, Officers
and Staff of

JEFRA MARKETING CORPORATION

Announce with deep sorrow
the passing away of

ANTONIO "KAYA" UY

who was called by our Lord
on January 9, 2007
in the Grace of our LORD at the age of 90.

His remains lie in state at
Bacolod Yong Tho Taoist Temple,
Kamunsil St., La Salle Avenue,
Bacolod City.

**Interment will be held at the
Greenhills Memorial Cemetery
on Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 8:00 a.m.**

Please pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

The Directors, Officers
and Staff of

SCAN MARINE INC.
MARCO / BRP

Announce with deep sorrow
the passage of

ANTONIO "KAYA" UY

who peacefully joined our Creator
on Tuesday, January 9, 2007.

Wake : Bacolod Yong Tho Taoist Temple,
Kamunsil St., La Salle Avenue,
Bacolod City

Interment : Greenhills Memorial Cemetery
on Sunday, January 14, 2007
at 8:00 AM

Please pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God." 2 Corinthians 4:14

William Sy Tang

Peacefully joined our Creator on January 7, 2007 at the age of 54.

His loving wife **Pacita Sia Tang**; children **Paul Michael, Audrey Michelle, Ferdinand Mathew, Melanie Mae, Patricia Heiwa, Hilary Chelsea**; father **Basilio**; mother **Anita**; grandchildren **Justin Terrel, Rhod Juremy**; son-in-law **Emmanuel**; aunt **Rosita Sy Co.**

His remains lie in state at Chapel-12, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

He will be cremated on Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 11:30 a.m. also at La Funeraria Paz.

"Come, you whom my Father has blessed..." (Mt 25:34)

Resto En Paz

DR. RICARDO BERNAL VILLAMIL

of Dagupan City, Pangasinan.

*peacefully joined our Creator on January 9, 2007
at the age of 95.*

His loving wife **Josefina Cabrera**; children **Dr. Roman Dionisio** and **Emma, Atty. Ricardo, Jr.** and **Esther, Corazon, Atty. Rafael Roque** and **Elvira**, and **Fr. Roberto Jose**; grandchildren, relatives, in-laws and friends request the readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Villamil's Residence, 45 Burgos St., Dagupan City.

Interment will be on Monday, January 15, 2007
at the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Dagupan City
after the 8:30 a.m. Holy Mass
in the St. John the Evangelist Parish Church, Dagupan City.

"In lieu of Floral Offerings (Flowers), the Bereaved Family appreciates Your Cash or Cheque Donations for the Mary Help of Christians College Seminary and/or the Retired Clergy of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan. Please give your loving donations and get your official receipts from Fr. Roy. Thank you!"

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

Our Dearly Beloved

LOLITA GO FUENTES

*Peacefully joined our Lord on
January 6, 2007 at the age of 66.*

Her brothers **Tony, August**; sisters **Elena, Violy, Tita, Susan** and **Cherry** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Del Pilar Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City.

Funeral Mass will be on January 14, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. at the La Funeraria Paz-Del Pilar Chapel. Cremation will follow at the Manila Memorial Park Crematory.

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages...

Zamboanga City Water District B2
City Government of Zamboaga B2
National Housing Authority B2
Techinical Education and Skills Authority B4
Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority B4

"To Jesus Through Mary"

PACIENCIA "SENY" PEDREGOSA y SANTIAGO

of B.F. Homes Parañaque and Obando, Bulacan

Peacefully joined her Creator on the 8th day of January 2007 at the age of 58.

Her bereaved husband, **Paquito**; children **Lawrence** and **Ningning**; brother and sisters, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Pag-asa Chapel, Obando, Bulacan.

Interment will be on January 14, 2007, Sunday, after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at the San Pascual Baylon Parish Church, Obando, Bulacan.

For your Classified Ads requirements:

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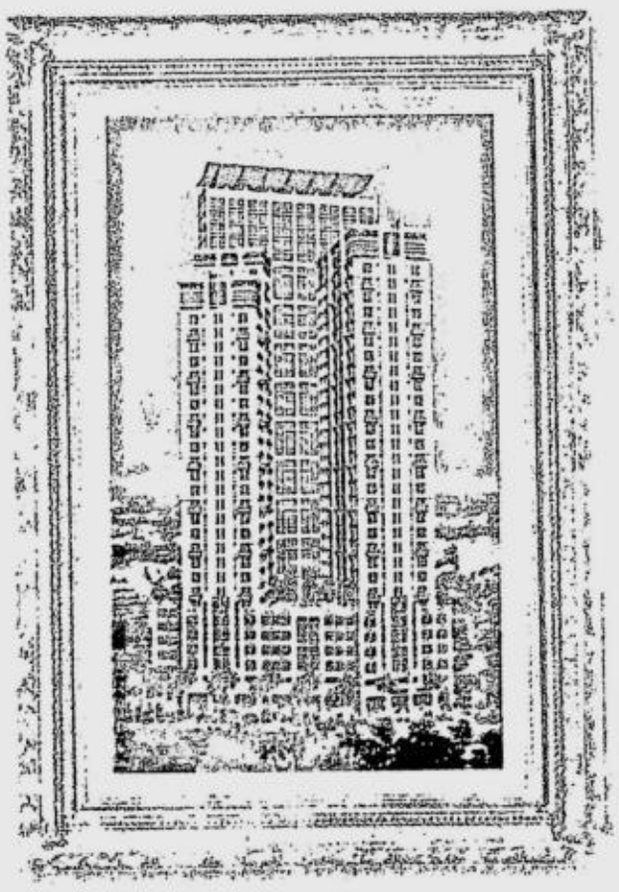

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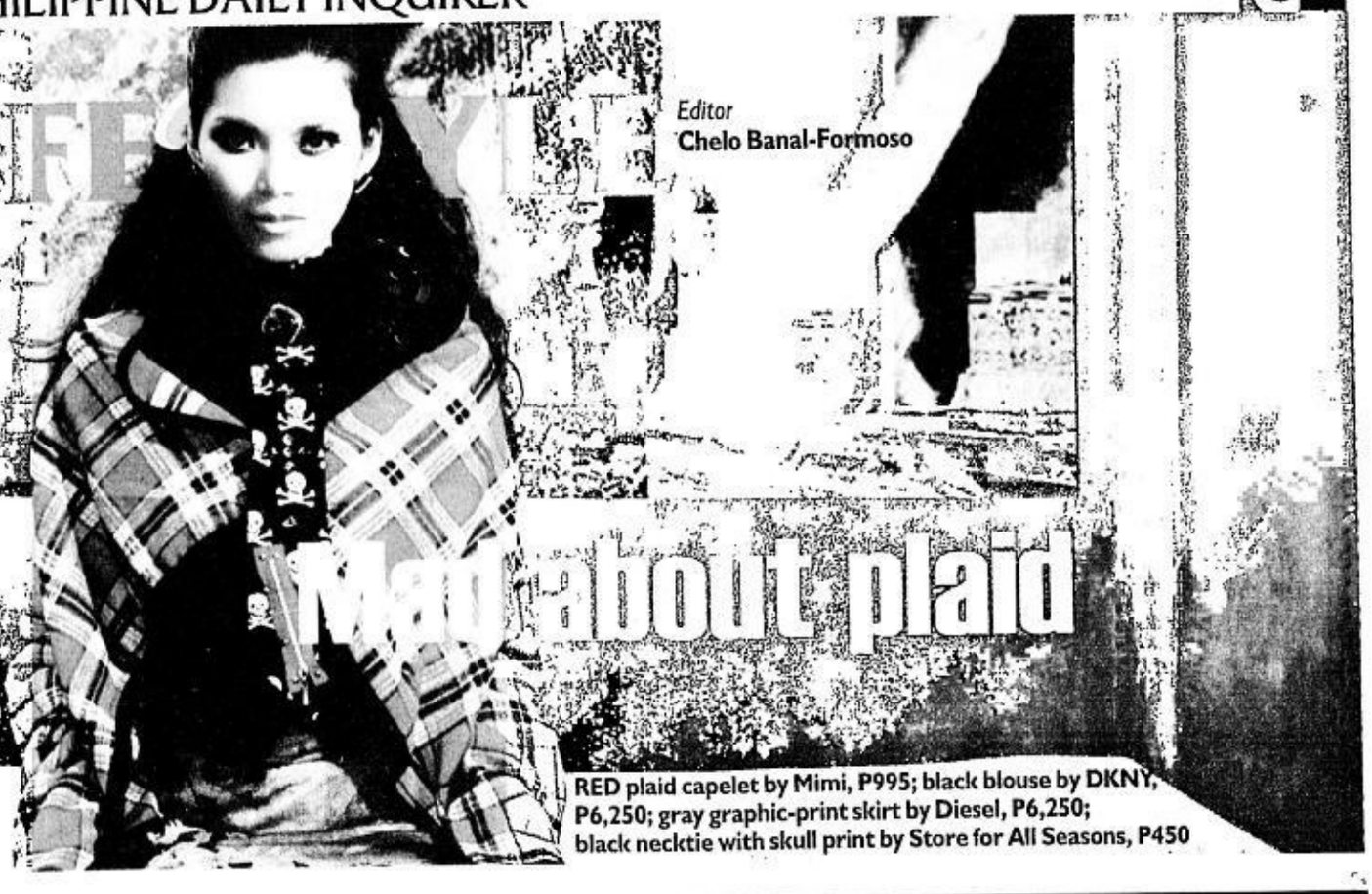
FASHION

LIFESTYLE

Contributing Editors
Apples Aberin-Sadhwani
and Jenni Epperson

Editor
Chelo Banal-Formoso

Mad about plaid



RED plaid capelet by Mimi, P995; black blouse by DKNY, P6,250; gray graphic-print skirt by Diesel, P6,250; black necktie with skull print by Store for All Seasons, P450

VISIONS OF A STRONG AND muscular Mel Gibson as William Wallace (remember "Braveheart"?) in a belted kilt come to mind at the mention of the words "tartan" or "plaid". Images of Prince Charles in more traditional, dressier versions of the kilt come to mind, as well.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Plaid has undeniably become a symbol and emblem of Scotland and Scottish culture. During the middle ages, warring clans in the Scottish Highlands wore the pattern. These days, pampered princes who rule all of England wear it, too.

From a totally different viewpoint, plaid may translate to nothing more than a mere pattern of checked designs. But thanks to designers like Alexander McQueen, brands like Burberry, and style icons like Victoria Beckham, who was recently spotted wearing a chic tartan skirt, the design is used and worn in infinitely more fashionable ways.

Plaid is especially in demand this season, as retail stores stock up on the pattern in various forms—from cutesy little boleros to extra short skirts and shorts to schoolgirl-like dresses. The checked pattern which comes in different colors and combinations can even be worn in the form of ultra-skinny pants, chic

MAD/ C2

PINK plaid miniskirt by Topshop, P2,145; purple chiffon top by Warehouse, P2,945; blue-gray "Buckingham" pumps by Cole Haan, P12,000

Photography Aldwin Aspillera
Styling Mela de Luna
Makeup Mickey See of Shu Uemura
Hair Nante Alingasa using Kiehl's Stylist Series
Model Meki Saldaña/Cal Carries
Shot on location at Hillock Inn,
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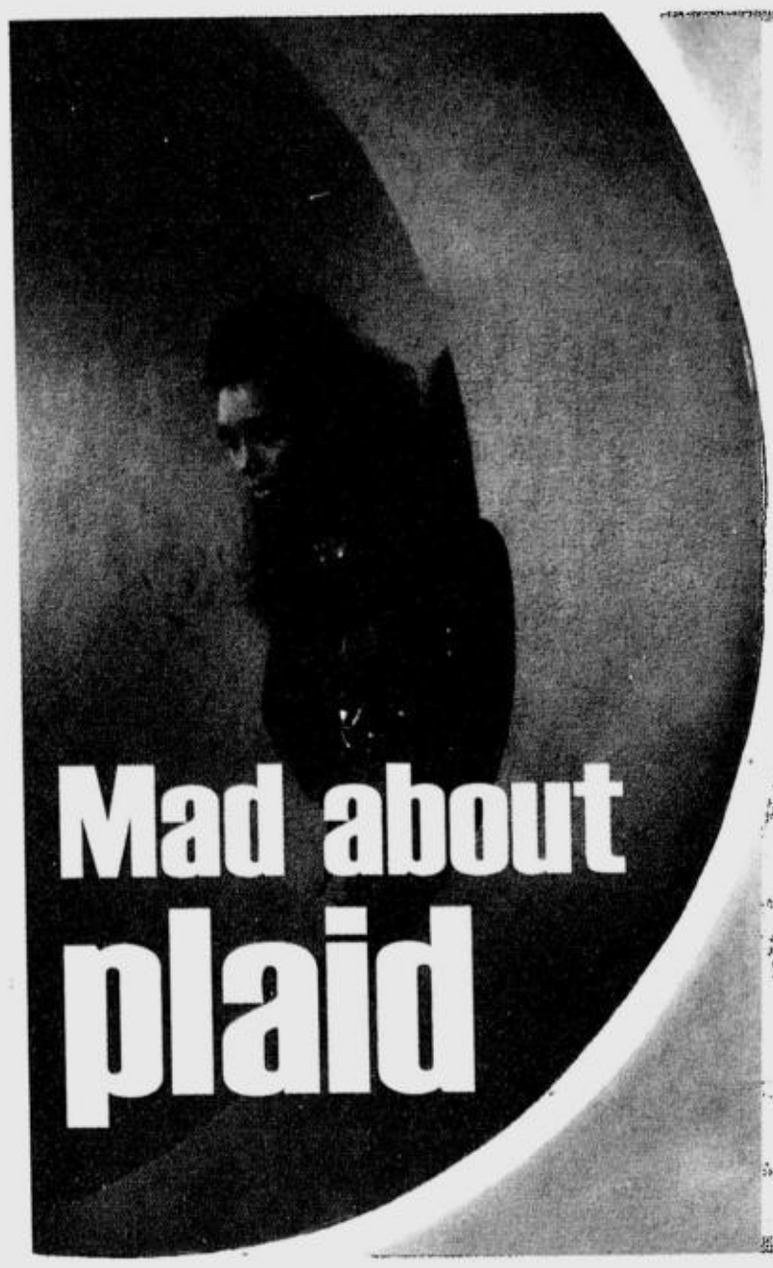

Mad about plaid

Clad yourself in plaid, and have fun in the process!

DENIMS with plaid accents, P1,770, and baby-pink "Morphine" tee, P680, both from Store for All Seasons; yellow cardigan by Topshop, P2,195; bronze strappy heels by Janylin, P1,295

From page C1

capelets or edgy vests.

Although plaid is normally associated with colder climates and locales, it can still be worn in more tropical settings. In this case, lighter fabrics like cotton is best while heavier traditional wool tartans should be reserved for cooler places.

So, if you're looking for new ways to update your wardrobe, here's a consider. If you're not ready to in a major way, simply use ac like bags, scarves, hair bands (w at a time, mind you), to give it a erwise, go ahead and clad yo plaid... and have fun in the pr course!

E-mail the author at afashion@ com.ph.

end of season
sale

January 12 - 31

up to 50% off
on selected lines only

TOPMAN

Slash and burn

Jenni Epperson

FIRST OFF, HAPPY New Year *shopingeros y shopingeras*!

I'm sure you've exhausted all your energies on the holiday festivities, and the last thing on your mind now is to go shopping. After braving the malls in search of special gifts for friends and loved ones, you probably have to be bribed to go back to those hellholes, right?

Well, how's this for a bribe: the 40 to 70 percent-off sales!

A bit of a warning, though—if you're broke or already in debt, after-Christmas sales are not for you. The post-Christmas slashdowns are for those who have extra dough stashed in the bank and for moms who love good bargains.

After-Christmas sales are a means for stores, retailers and malls to unload old collections and make room for new ones by slashing their prices. But a good shopper should see through that entire fabulous smokescreen and decipher which sales are worth conquering and which ones are for ditching. Because while some shops try to dupe you into buying last season's collection at only 10 to 20-percent off, others are unloading their stocks at huge discounts!

My advice: take advantage of stores that give you 50 to 80-percent discounts. After all, why walk into a shop that offers minimal discounts when similar products are already marked down elsewhere in the world?

But what about the retailers? I must admit that I do feel for the shops owners who are in a rut because of overbought stocks and items that haven't moved in the shelves. I should know, I used to handle a multi-million dollar retail company, so I know that when a buyer makes a mistake of overestimating the demands of a particular item, it can cost the employees' commissions, bonuses, perhaps the store's viability at worst!

The sudden drop of the peso can raise the prices of goods, too. It is truly a difficult balancing act, so hats off to ballsy retailers!

The high cost of goods is generally hard to swallow, and it's even harder to part with the expensive pieces. But sometimes, we all have to bite the bullet. Just treat the sale prices as some sort of an investment on frequent shoppers, and do extend big discounts to your VIP clients. Hopefully, with good service and better merchandise, these clients will be your shop's loyalists for years and will also be the first ones to line up for new arrivals at regular prices.

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I suggest burn caloric stores wor knows we a pounds we days. But re by buying w

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PLAID vest by Diesel, P7,850; purple top by Dorothy Perkins, P945; red corduroy miniskirt by Lacoste, P5,450

GREEN plaid jacket from Mimi, P1,250; white brocade miniskirt by Topshop, P2,145; black lace stockings by Store for All Seasons; brown "Buckingham" leather boots by Cole Haan, P17,800

GRAY plaid dress by Warehouse, P4,095; green top with bell sleeves by Topshop, P2,345; black lace stockings by Store for All Seasons

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If you're broke or already in debt, post-Christmas sales are not for you

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author at jfashion@
nh.

ILLUSTRATION STEPH BRAVO

Hot tips for after-Christmas shopping

Been on a tight budget this holiday season? Then you're probably looking forward to marked-down goodies that will be on the shelves right after Christmas. At this time, the shelves are still neatly arranged, so it's easy to locate the items you've been dying to buy. Also, sales people tend to be in a better mood in the morning and will be eager to assist. If you're finding that last pair in your size (that animal print pump you've had your eye on) has been snatched up by someone else, ask a salesperson to check the stockroom for you.

Bag lifting. Hunting for bargains, whether at the mall or the outlets, can be exhausting. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a backpack or tote bag to carry your purchases. Avoid lugging around shopping bags by asking the salesperson to put your items in a box or bag.

Trim those Christmas blowouts. Christmas sales, holiday decorations and festive goodies are generally marked down by this time. So if you're thinking of upgrading the look of your home by changing your living room theme for next Christmas, now is the time to buy those metallic red and green pillowcases to match the couch and start planning for next year's holiday table. Don't worry about too early to buy next year's Christmas decorations. Besides, don't we all say, "How time flies!" every December 26th?

Candy canes, fruit cakes, chocolates and Christmas trees cookies are a good buy. Make sure the little ones will not mind popping reindeer biscuits in the mouth and throwing away fallen pine needles.

Stock clear of the thirty-eight-leg centipede jackets, button-at-all-sides puffy trench coats and bee-coats in orange, white and sandy-red hues (camping buys, but unless you plan to live in a corrugated cardboard box, they're best left on the rack). And your fashion-packed New Year's resolution will be a lot more within reach.

World's best cure for pullover hair, dandruff and lint-on-suit: Get a good shampoo and conditioner. Then, if you're still having problems, see a doctor.

end of season
sale
January 12 - 31
up to 50% off
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TOPSHOP

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Make clothes fit better

THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE FIVE pounds or less to go in achieving your pre-holiday's weight will benefit from this column. If you are closer to 10 pounds and above, there is no way around it. You need to exercise more, eat less, or do an intensive detox program—or you should do all three—to make those unwanted pounds budge and look great in clothes.

Let me make it clear that the products mentioned will not make you lose weight or grant you dramatic inch loss, so do not expect to drop quickly to dress size unless you combine it with diet and exercise. They will, however, make your clothes fit better by making skin contract slightly and release water retention from puffy areas such as hips, thighs, stomach and bra line. So expect an improvement in cellulite appearance, a looser, more comfortable fit on pants and fitted dresses which are your size.

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

If you are floating between sizes (meaning a size 8 is a bit snug but a 10 is too loose), you will fit into the smaller one better the next morning. Do not, however, expect to fit into a size 6 in a day or so after because the excess you have would no longer be water but actual fat that solutions simply cannot burn away.

APIVITA Metamorphosis Body serum and cream

Application: Apply twice a day if possible on skin just dried after shower. If you can only do it once, it is more rewarding to do so before bedtime so that when you wake up the next morning, the tight jeans straight from the wash will just slide right on and zip up with ease.

Technique: Unless specified for a specific area like Shiseido's Body Creator Men Abdominal gel, apply to ankles, moving upward to the calves, thighs, butt, hips, abdomen, up to the waist; this is to rev up circulation since excess fluids tend to pool around the feet, ankles and legs due to gravity.

Best for cellulite

This application is best for cellulite and gives most dramatic results: Skin Doctor's Lipolene and Shiseido's Body Creator sculpting gel.

Even during PMS season, my thighs and butt did not have cellulite but the diameter was still thick that some pants did not glide as smoothly.

The following applications could not be fully successful at diminishing cellulite appearance, but I could wear tight pants, look great and feel comfy as the clothes just slid on. They have fat-burning qualities as well but I am not entirely sure if it's mostly water. I am referring to Avon CelluSculpt, Clarin's Body Shaping Cream, Decleor Detox balm, Apivita Metamorphosis Body serum and cream (feels hot on skin because of peppers and ginger in mix so a lot of sweating occurs), and Junkisui Proportional Creator Mousse (P945).

Best for both cellulite and diameter reduction is Clarin's Total Body Lift. It's not as dramatic in advanced cellulite results as Skin Doctor's Lipolene, but super for reduction of up to stage 2 cellulite.

A multipurpose product is Junkisui White Lift serum (P945), which is designed to whiten skin, burn fat and eliminate water retention to improve cellulite appearance.

At long last, a product designed for men's most stubborn problems—love handles and belly bulge—is Shiseido Men Body creator Abdominal Gel.

Research states that men's belly fat is made of sterner stuff than that of women so fat there is tougher to remove.

I tried Shiseido Men Body and it works for me so I believe women can use it as well. My theory is that cosmetic companies know that unlike women, a lot of men don't want to dish out money for a beauty product unless it really works and does so fast.

ESTÉE Lauder's Cooling Gel

If your problem is swollen calves and ankles that have no cellulite, Estée Lauder's Cooling Gel for legs will rev up circulation and bring back original size fast.

Note: Testing of the products above was done over a period of seven years—and not all at once.

Except for Apivita, which is warm to almost hot, all products range from cool to very cold on skin.

Shiseido is available at any Watson's branch, at Rockwell and at Glorietta. Apivita, Junkisui, and Skin Doctor's are available at Essenses. Decleor and Clarins are available at Rustan's.

E-mail kinnysalas@yahoo.com

Walk for Autism on Jan. 14

THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE Philippines is holding a Walk for Autism Jan. 14, 6 a.m., at the Asean Garden, CCP Complex, Pasay City. The event is part of the observance of the 11th National Autism Consciousness Week Jan. 14-21. Registration is free.

An autism lay forum will be held Jan. 18, 1-5 p.m., at the Sugar Regulatory Auditorium, North Avenue, QC. On Jan. 19, 8 a.m.-12 nn and 2-5 p.m., an art contest and quiz bee competition will be held at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, DepEd Central Office, Ortigas, Pasig City.

The documentary "Alyana" will be screened at 2 p.m ., Jan. 20-21, at SM Cinema, North Edsa, QC; Jan. 27 at SM Cinema, Cebu City; and Feb. 10 at SM Cinema, Baguio City. Dr. Alexis L. Reyes will lecture on "All You Need to Know about Autism Now" on Jan. 24, 2-5 p.m., at Grand Majestic Convention Center, Cebu City.

The ASP Family Day will be on Jan. 28, 12 nn-5 p.m., at the Activity Center, SM North Edsa, QC. Call 9266941/4368713.

SALE. Lulu Castagnette Stores, except the Rustan's branches, are holding their End of Season sale until Jan. 15. Enjoy big discounts on all items at branches in Glorietta 4, SM Megamall Bldg. A, and SM North's The Block. Grab a pair of French denim Lulu jeans named after different cities of France, or choose from the 2006 Fall/Winter Collections Harvest Moon, Fine and Dandy and Boudoir Blues.

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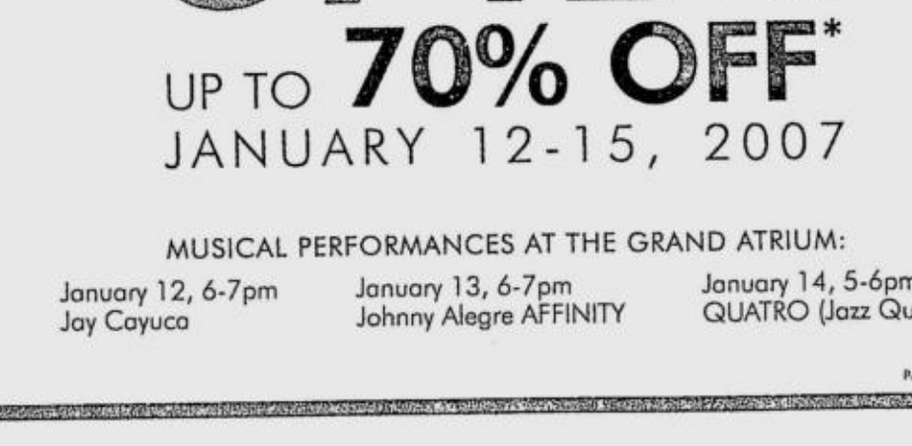

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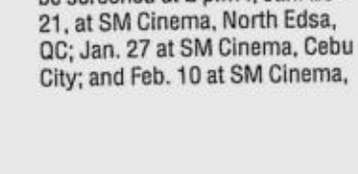

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Low-key Beirut-based Cebuano Cary Santiago is charting new paths for Philippine fashion

By Alex Y. Vergara

NOT TOO MANY PEOPLE beyond his native Cebu have heard of Cary Santiago, but during the few times he made brief appearances in Manila, the fashion designer was like a super typhoon that blew everything and everyone in its path.

Just who is Santiago, how did he start in the business and where on earth was he all this time?

He first appeared on our radar screens in 2004 when he won the grand prize at a local competition for his stylized and intricate terno made of dyed jusi. His was easily the crowd favorite even then.

Inspired by the Philippine eagle Pag-asa, his winning entry was fashioned from dozens upon dozens of faux feathers, which Santiago painstakingly dyed a gradating shade of brown and off-white, and inserted with real stalks from actual bird feathers.

Together with four other designers, he represented the country in the International Competition of Young Fashion Designers in Paris later that year.

He resurfaced two years later when he joined the "Metrowear," a smorgasbord of a fashion show that also featured the collections of such designing stalwarts as Ivar Aseron, Joey Samson, Vittorio Barba, Mike dela Rosa, Ito Curata, Rajo Laurel, Rhett Eala, Philip Rodriguez, Efren Ocampo and Lulu Tan-Gan, among others.

Again, despite such a crowded field, Santiago, 35, was able to hold his own with a five-piece collection made of appliqués and strips of crepe de chine done in such a way as to mimic a dragon's scales. The relative unknown became easily one of the most applauded designers that night.

"I've done a number of shows in the Middle East," said Santiago, "but Metrowear was my very first show in Manila. I'm so happy that my clothes were well-received."

This time, even if he wanted to shy away from the attendant media glare and to retreat quietly to Cebu or fly back to the Middle East, where he has been based since 1996, Santiago has created such an impact among Manila's fashion cognoscenti that INQUIRER Fashion lost no time asking him to grace its pages with his creations.

Despite the short notice (less than two weeks), Santiago gamely obliged by fashioning several never-before-seen dresses in his Cebu atelier before having them shipped to Manila.

Top clientele

Even this story was pieced together via cell phone and e-mail, as the designer was still busy as of press time catering to the holiday orders of such loyal clients as Via Hoffman, Amparito Lhuillier, Marguerite Lhuillier, Rosebud Sala, Mariquita Yeung, Tess Schauffer, Edna Lhuillier and a few others.

These fashion plates are probably making the most of Santiago's brief stay in Cebu, as the peripatetic designer plans to fly back to Beirut sometime next year, where he still works as a creative director and designer of a couture house that caters to certain members of Arab royalty.

If not for a special someone he left behind in the war-torn city, however, Santiago won't have second thoughts of leaving the Middle East for good in favor of the Philippines. He's even open to the idea of branching out in Manila.

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Hair [illegible] & Allan Bacina
Models 2tay Maristela & Meki Saldaña/Cal Carrie's
All gowns by Cary Santiago (0919-8850348)

Cebu fashion storm

From page D1

"I've been based in the Middle East, first in Dubai, for 10 years now," he said during a short phone interview. "It's been a great deal of fun, as I've learned a lot and met a number of interesting people along the way, but I'm really beginning to miss home."

Home, after all, is where he learned the ABCs of fashion, first from his mother, who used to be a master cutter and designer herself.

"I grew up practically in her shop watching her make clothes," Santiago wrote. "I think I couldn't have taken an interest in fashion if it weren't for her."

Ferre, Gaultier

It was only a matter of time before Santiago, then only 15, was lured to the world of fashion. He worked first as a designer for a Cebu-based RTW company. He then joined Nikki Crodua, where he worked for four years as an assistant designer.

Apart from his mother, Santiago cites Gianfranco Ferre, Jean Paul Gaultier and the late great Joe Salazar as his idols.

Small wonder, since his design sensibility seems like a cross between the intricate, at times mind-boggling details Gaultier is known for and the impeccable construction that is a Ferre trademark. He probably has as much respect for the female figure as Salazar had during his time.

"When I was still a fledgling designer, I paid so much attention to their work, their techniques and the way they translated their creative visions into their collections," he recalled.

Just when he was beginning to warm up as a businessman by opening his own shop in Cebu, the opportunity to work in a boomtown like Dubai beckoned. He has little to regret of his decision since his years in a foreign land not only helped hone his creativity, but also his ability to improvise and see the big picture.

"As a creative director, I decide and dictate the look, the mood and everything else necessary to come up with a collection—from the colors, to the shoes and accessories," he said.

Santiago's idea of a fashionable woman goes beyond trendiness. Although he's not one to discriminate one customer from another, for some reason, "accomplished, creative, well-traveled, well-bred, well-read and socially important" women seem to favor him and his clothes.

And that rarefied list includes fashionistas of all ages, shapes, colors and nationalities.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

INNO Sotto and Sandy Prieto-Romualdez with the guest of honor

TESSA Prieto-Valdes, Leica Carpo and Junie del Mundo

Welcome wagon

INQUIRER Fashion had the opportunity to meet W Magazine's features editor James Reginato during a special dinner hosted by Philip and Sandy Romualdez in their lovely home. Reginato was in town with photographer Ben Hoffman to interview Ms Imelda Marcos about her jewelry line.

Present during the intimate affair were Philippine Tatler editor in chief Anton San Diego, our very own sea-princess Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Jon Jon Rufino, Junie del Mundo, top designers Inno Sotto and Jojie Lloren, and stylish couple Leica Carpo and Juan Miguel Ongsiako.

Apparently, this was the editor's first visit to Manila. He was overheard saying that people here were chic and fashionable—a definite compliment, considering that he writes for one of the most luxurious fashion and lifestyle magazines.

W Magazine's features editor James Reginato with INQUIRER Fashion's Apples Aberin-Sadhwani and Jenni Epperson

FASHION BUZZ

Hot, haute, hot news!

Pinoy design tilt

In their effort to help young designers gain recognition here and abroad, the Fashion Design Council of the Philippines, under the leadership of Jojie Lloren, is once again staging the Philippine Young Designer's Competition on Feb. 8, 6 p.m., at the Glorietta Activity Center.

"We are looking for designers who can make use of some indigenous materials to create wearable pieces that are simpler and lighter than entries from previous years," says Lloren.

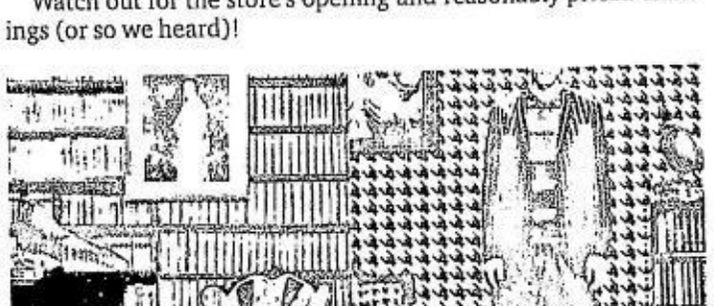
The local tilt will be judged by 13-15 style mavens and fashion experts with the purpose of finding representatives for international competitions in Tokyo and the US, namely the Doreme and Art of Fashion competitions, respectively.

British invasion

Anglo-philes (and fashion-philes, too!) have much to look forward to this coming season. Ben Sherman, the English brand of status shirts turned lifestyle store, will be opening in March on the third level of Shangri-La Plaza.

Ben Sherman, who started out designing shirts and beachwear, founded the hip and quirky brand in 1963. The "mod god," as he came to be known, was committed not just to style, but to quality and fine tailoring as well. His shirts always had unique details such as a button-down collar, back pleat and loop, which are now quite recognizable.

Watch out for the store's opening and reasonably priced offerings (or so we heard)!



LIFE-STYLED
Thelma San Juan

The Superwoman era is over

WHY? AT THE END OF year, in the threshold of a new year, we always find ourselves asking why things happen or don't. We fumble in the dark for reasons. Often, factual answers never do come. Sometimes enlightenment dawns on you if you're lucky.

Such is the case especially when tragedy strikes, like losing a loved one. At the dawn of 2007, the lifestyle circle has lost two of its most vibrant, young and good men. **EJ Litton**, the man who helped build Strumms and Dish, a mover of Manila's night life, passed away after a debilitating battle with cancer. **Joel Tantoco**, scion of the Rustan's family, succumbed to *bangungot*, a sudden-death syndrome suffered mostly by Asian men.

EJ and Joel were at the prime of their lives. More important, they were well-liked and loved. Joel was the man behind the fashion shows our fashion editors staged at Rustan's last year, an unassuming yet very warm and friendly presence in the social crowd.

We were lucky to have at least worked with him.

Gone too soon. Why, we ask of fate. We can only condole with their loved ones, we cannot give the answers. Nobody can.

What this new year brings us, or me at least, is the realization that there comes a point in one's life when you stop looking for reasons in every nook and cranny of your life. You cannot be in control 24/7. There comes a point when you yield control to your colleagues, to your loved ones, to a higher being, to the universe. You can't be all-knowing and all-seeing, you realize finally.

Live in the moment. That's what we told each other in previous years—how one must maximize the present instead of worrying about the future. To that, we add in contrast, tune out of the moment. Detach yourself from it.

Sometimes, we get buried in the clutter of the day, when the worries of yesterday jam with the pressures of today. If only to have clarity and discernment, it pays to get out of the moment and see it from a distance, as if behind some screen or curtain that filters things.

Filtering, de-cluttering, tuning out—you need them in this day of info overload and stress. You must de-clutter, do away with people and things that merely clog up your life. You must discern and choose who and which moment/event you should take seriously, and who and which you should pass up. You can't go through everything, you can't handle everyone.

You're not Superwoman. No such creature—that's news for you in 2007. Superwomen and superheroes are carryovers from the '80s when yuppies wanted to have it all. Now you realize life is too short to have it all. More important, you don't need to have it all.

We asked some colleagues and friends, as we do each year, how they are, at what stage they are in their lives, and their wish for 2007 for themselves. Interesting, inspiring answers:

Margarita Fores, who just survived cancer: After the life-changing events in 2006, I find myself in a happily enlightened and thankful state. Year of the Boar, 2007, is my year. It also ushers in my 20th year in the business. I wish for enough time and opportunities to show my appreciation to all those who have helped me and touched me throughout this very blessed period in my life.

May it also wave a magic wand and cast good luck and energy on the many new things I still want to do.

Alya Honasan: Let's call it the stage of creative acceptance. I've learned to find happiness where I can, despite life's difficulties. I've come to terms with what I still can and can no longer do. I'm hoping I discover more things I didn't know I could do in 2007. *Pwedeng bumati*?

Lorraine Belmonte: I'm in a great place now. I'm at peace with who I am and satisfied with what I've accomplished in my career. My daughter is successful, too. So for 2007 I think I'll just chill—and try some growth hormones!

Louie Cruz: I am just at the foot of the mountain and I want to reach the top this year despite being aware that it was just always beautiful at the bottom.

Ben Chan: My passion for my business and craft has remained the same as when I started 20 years ago. We celebrate 20 years of Bench, we'd like to give back something to the people. We're launching the Bench Conscience book, which hopes to create awareness and promote the importance of education through reading.

Ambeth Ocampo: I'm 45 and thinking of what I will do and what I'm still capable of doing when I retire at 60. I haven't published any book since I was appointed chair of the National Hysterical (he means Historical) Institute, so this year I want to complete unfinished books, start others while continuing to teach history as best as I can.

Ces Drilon: I'm at the stage where I'm back doing what I love best: reporting. I'm out in the field again, chasing stories. It's exhilarating. I'm also at the point in my life where there is more clarity about what I want, where I'm going, and there is little room for compromises. I'm hoping to start building a house and also work on a book project. I'm truly in an exciting phase.

Conrad Onglao: I'm at a stage of full contentment, happiness, peace. And whatever comes along is nothing but icing on the cake. My wish to find a partner has finally happened and now my life is complete (wonderful children, great career and the woman of my life). I can't wish for more for myself.

Albert Almendralejo: It's payback time. Paying back through time, money and resources for my family for providing me love and support during my low moments. For my school San Beda for nurturing and educating me to be a man for others, and for my country for providing an environment for business to thrive. I hope 2007 will pave the way for clean and honest elections and political stability.

More friends and colleagues next week.

A New Year thought: There comes a point in your life when you yield control to your colleagues, to your loved ones, to a higher being, to the universe

JOEL Tantoco, Trixie Arriola, Ernie Lopez and Gigi Mabanta

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PACITA de Guzman, Biya Borlongan, Annabelle Adriano and Celine Bautista. (standing) Tito de Guzman, Robert Chenjen, Baby Tan, Mellie Ablaza, Frank Adriano, Myrna Borromeo and Noel Bautista

ROSETTE Guerrero, Virma Vergel de Dios and Tess Castro. (standing) Arlu Gomez, Biya Borlongan, Bert Castro, Dandy Gomez and Bonnie Vergel de Dios

THE FUN ROYALS. Vicki Arando, Nini Layug, Jan Janda, Consul of Gambia Agnes Huibonhoa and Love 14's Cha-Cha Camacho

Russian winter fantasy in hot Manila

THE INVITATION CAME WITH A TIARA on a velvet pillow. They were to the annual grand Christmas ball hosted by **Mellie Romero Ablaza** and her husband, businessman **Louie Ablaza**, and children **Marc**, **Jun-Jun** and **Czarina**, dahlings.

Mellie is, of course, the ultimate society hostess whose over-the-top panache is never more in evidence than at her yearly holiday bash. This time she decided to revive the Tsar's ball.

A stickler for details, Mellie attended to every little detail to recreate the truly grand majestic spirit of the bygone era of the Tsars of Russia, from ordering the sea bass to the selection of fine wines and champagne.

The preparation took months, with the help of her children and close pals **Boysie Villavicencio** and **Cha-Cha Camacho**, *palanggas*.

The Manila Polo Club was a sight of grandeur under the supervision of son Jun-Jun, who draped more than a thousand yards of fabric and ferried furniture, mirrors, artworks and antiques from the Ablaza home in New Manila and North Forbes.

Through the stairway aglow with tons and tons of Tivoli lights, hotshots from the chic diplomatic crops, government, media, and Manille's social scene came, were given a royal welcome by Mellie, in her **Ben Farrales** creation, and Louie A.

Costumed pages escorted us through a passageway of mirrors and candles, the splendid effect leading us to the fabulous baroque room, where traditional Russian delicacies like caviar and *blinis* were served, complemented with French wines and the finest champagne and Russian vodka, *naturellement*.

The room was animated by enchanting harp, flute and violin music.

A thanksgiving prayer was said by the cute Ablaza grandchildren. Then Marc Ablaza welcomed everyone and proposed the first toast on behalf of his parents and siblings.

A surprise announcement was made by **Godfrey Simaku**, ambassador of the Republic of Zambia, about the appointment of Louie A. as Zambia's honorary consul.

Another surprise was the musical number by the Ablazas' grandson, **Xavier Ablaza**, who played the marimba, a favorite instrument in Guatemala. After all, Mellie is the honorary consul of Guatemala, *n'cest pas*!

The excellently prepared sumptuous dinner of European dishes was a delight, satisfying the most discerning gourmand.

The Philippine Ballet Theater performed the ballet, under the Russian dance master, **Anatoly Panaslukov**, a former Bolshoi member, no less.

Apres a dazzling fireworks display, there were waltzing and ballroom dancing by the elegant women in tiaras and men in tux, *palanggas*.

THE ABLAZA royal court: Marc Ablaza, Tessa Ablaza, host Louie Ablaza and wife Mellie Romero Ablaza, Czarina Ablaza Syquia and Jun-Jun Ablaza

LADIES in waiting. Corazon Morando, Annie Bautista, Justice Consuelo Ynares Santiago

CHARITY-ORIENTED women of substance. Chit Salud and Karen Macasaet

Havaianas

There's no stopping Brazilian rubber footwear phenomenon Havaianas, the best flip flops in the world, from its Philippine invasion.

Havaianas fans, more popularly known as Havaianaticos, have just welcomed the latest All Flip-Flops, a retail outlet with 100 percent Havaianas merchandise at the Alabang Town Center.

The opening recently was a day of casual dining and free-flowing drinks.

The opening saw guests and fans trooping to the store and leaving with specially discounted pairs in tow. The retail outlet, owned by business partners **Geronimo Begre**, **Abba Napa** and **Alessandro Lacson**, was filled of pairs from Havaianas staples to hard-to-find ones.

Havaianas also recently held its annual "Make Your Own Havaianas" in Cebu. Cebuanos flocked to Ayala Center Cebu to choose from 14 brilliant shades for both soles and straps so they could create their unique Havaianas flip-flops.

Havaianas is famous for its buttery soft and 100-percent rubber construction created from a more than 40-year-old secret formula. The much celebrated flip flops, manufactured by Brazil's Sao Paulo Alpargatas and locally distributed by Terry S.A., has already sold more than 2.2 billion pairs since it was launched in 1962.

Havaianas is available at Rustan's, All Flip-Flops, Aura Athletica, Stoked, Chocolate Clothing Co., Gas and Celio.

L'Opera

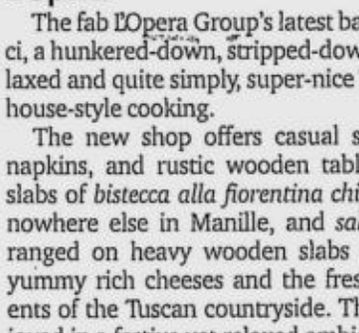
The fab L'Opera Group's latest baby is Balducci, a hunkered-down, stripped-down, casual, relaxed and quite simply, super-nice Tuscan farmhouse-style cooking.

The new shop offers casual sitting, paper napkins, and rustic wooden tables on which slabs of *bistecca alla fiorentina chianina*, found nowhere else in Manille, and *salumis* are arranged on heavy wooden slabs with tons of yummy rich cheeses and the freshest ingredients of the Tuscan countryside. The food is enjoyed in a festive yet relaxed ambience amid interiors by **Ermil** and **Fe Napa**'s furniture team at Century Woods, *palanggas*.

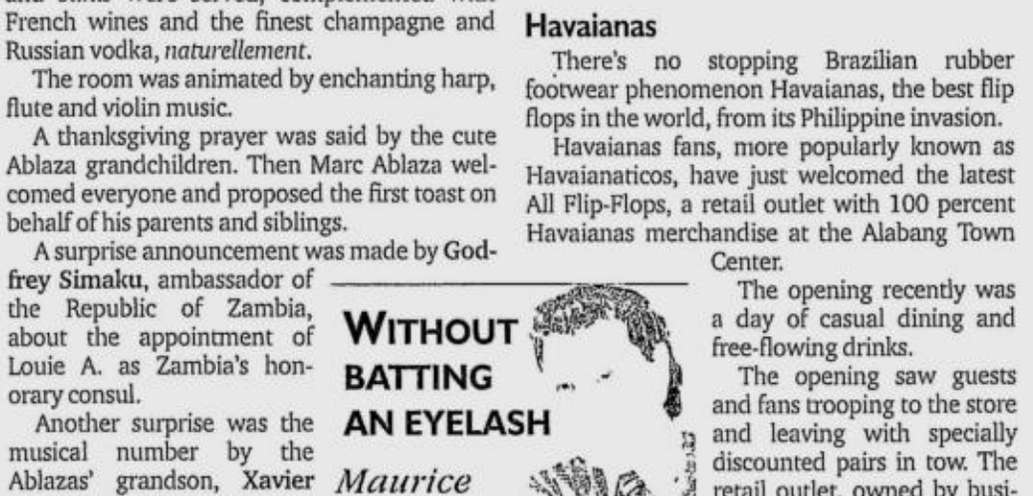
As no true Italian meal can be served without superb wine, next door is Barolo, which has a mind-blowing list of Italian reds and whites, *proseccos* and *grappas*, plus a fantastic selection of new world labels.

During the double opening of Balducci and Barolo, tons of *bistecca*, roast leg of lamb, grilled spring chicken, creamy ricotta ravioli and cannelloni, pasta, and a dazzling array of antipasti of *salumi* and cheeses were deftly prepared by the *maestro de cucina*, **Moreno Mattei**, no less, dahlings.

Check out Balducci and Barolo at the new and super-fun Serendra restaurant strip at Bonifacio High Street, Fort Bonifacio.



TOP restaurateurs: Nuvo and Silk's Louie Ysmael and LGC hotshot Larry Cruz



BALDUCCI manager Walter Castro, Ermil Napa, Dr. Daniel Vasquez, Kaye Tinga, Taguig Mayor Freddie Tinga, Ising Vasquez and Luciano Zanirato with chef Moreno Mattei (seated)

HEY, GOODLOOKERS: Mark and Jojie Garcia, Raymond Garcia, Paco Jarque, Marko Sarmiento and Blake Go

HAVAIANAS group: Official Havaianas Philippine distributors Jon Syjuco and Ann and Freddy Gonzalez flank Visayan sub-distributors Aimil Sarmiento (second from left) and Leanne Florendo.

TOTAL ACHIEVERS: Business partners and "Havaianaticos" Geronimo Begre, sultry beauty Abba Napa and Alessandro Lacson launch the latest All Flip-Flops store in Alabang Town Center.

CEBU'S "Havaianaticos" Joanna Lhuillier, Melissa Perez Rubio Ugarte and June Alegrado

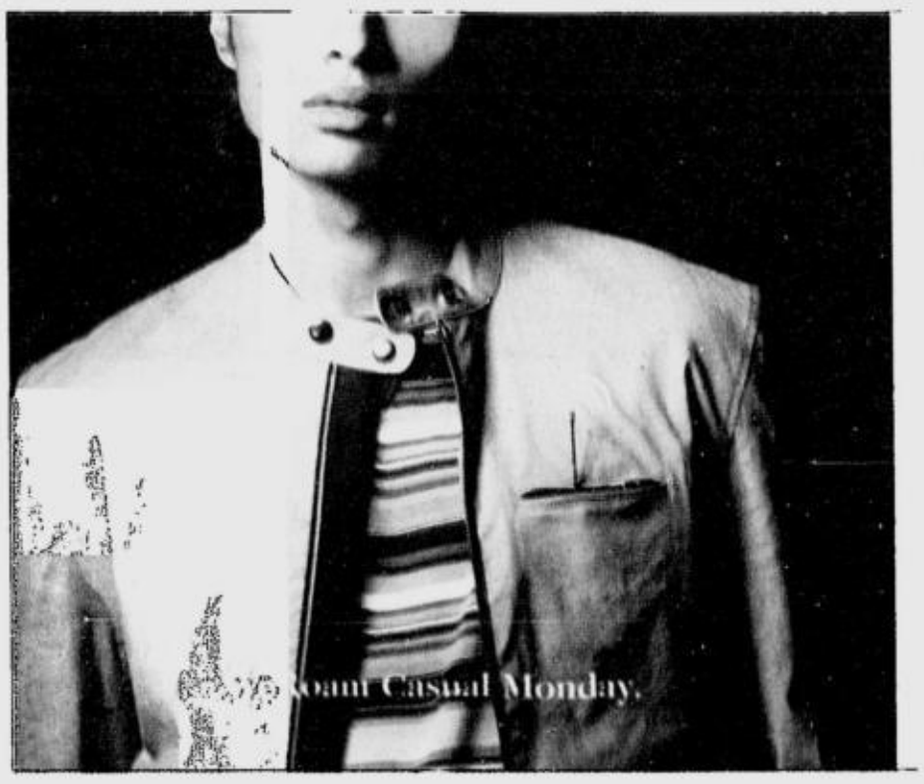
"MAKE Your Own Havaianas" culmination bash in Cebu, attended by Cebu First Lady Margot Osmeña, Bong Recio, Marie and Loi Villalon

TUSCANI LOVERS: Luch Zanirato Jr., Sally Zanirato, the Italian Embassy's Michael Angelo Nerini, Otta Montinola, Chiqui Locsin, Marianne Uy and Marbs Garcia

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system



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- **Jennifer Hudson on the brink of fame** InHollywood/E4
- **Ara Mina at home** Living Stars /F4

"STARSTRUCK" contender Jesi Corcuera

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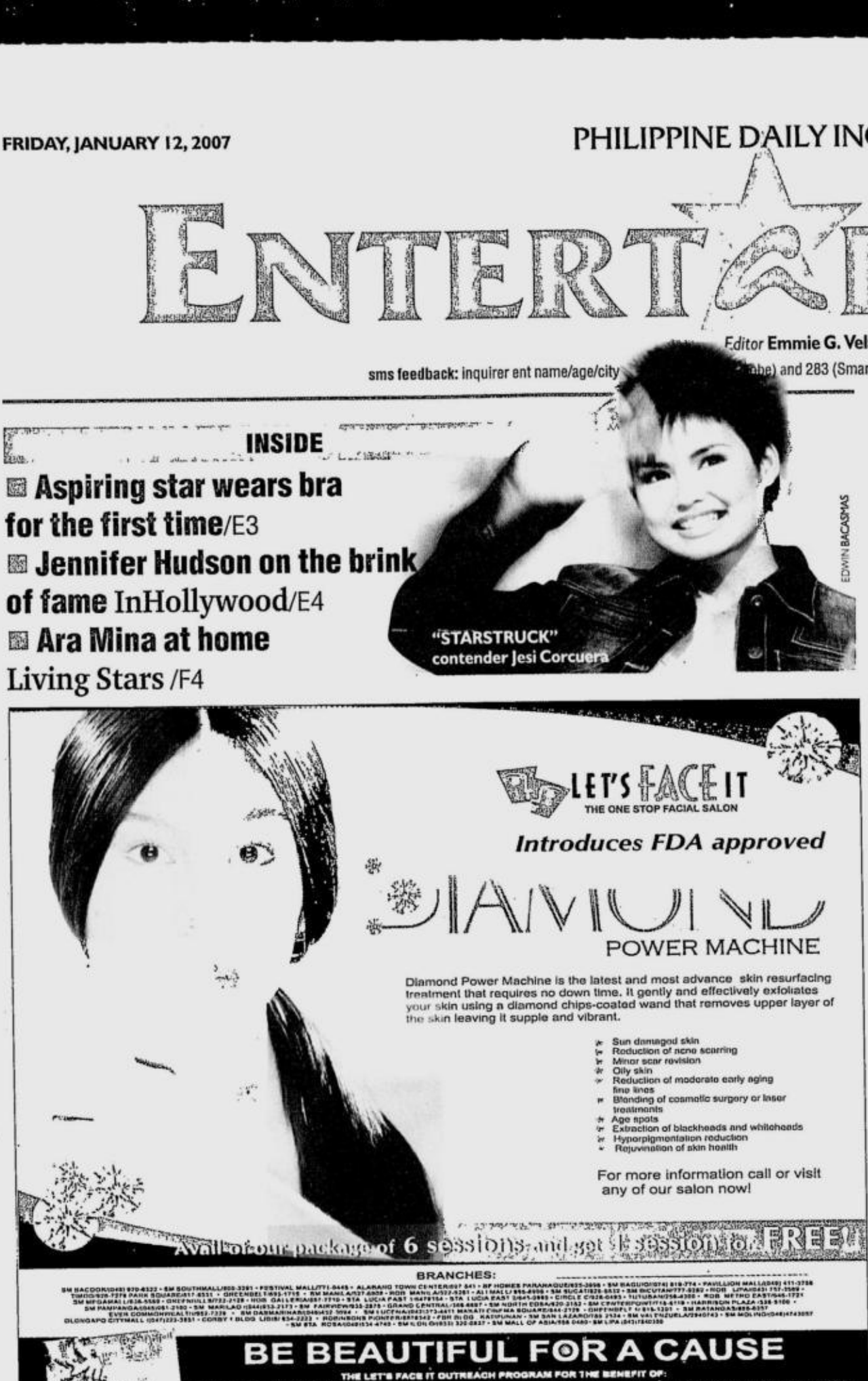

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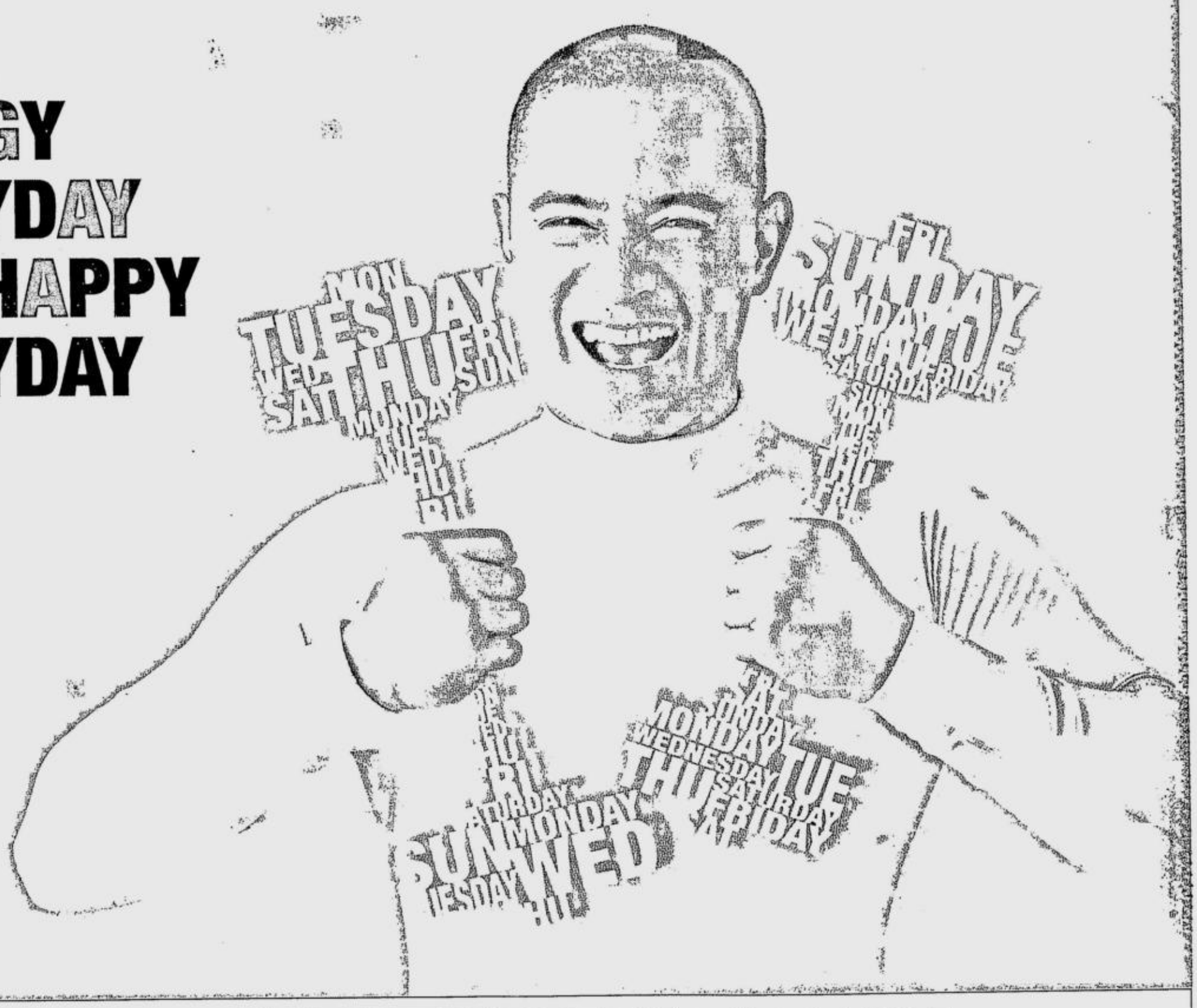

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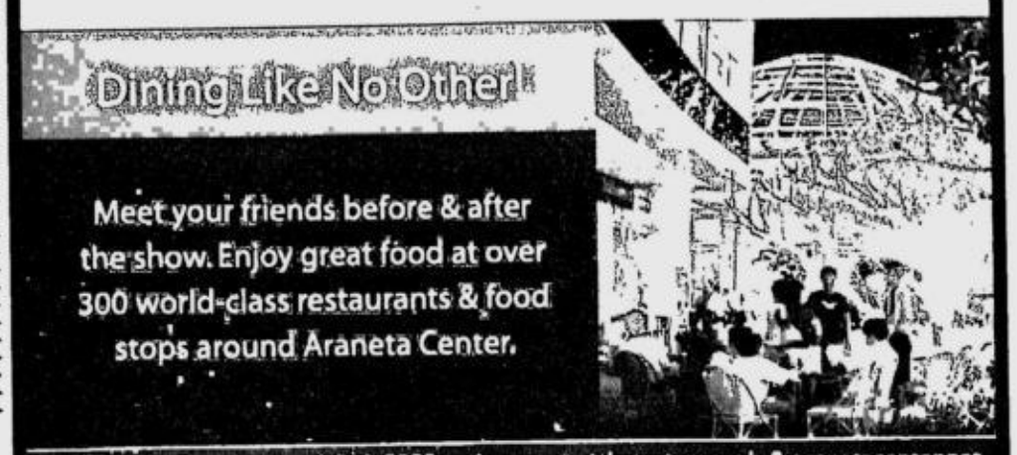

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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:00 / 3:35 / 6:10 / 8:45	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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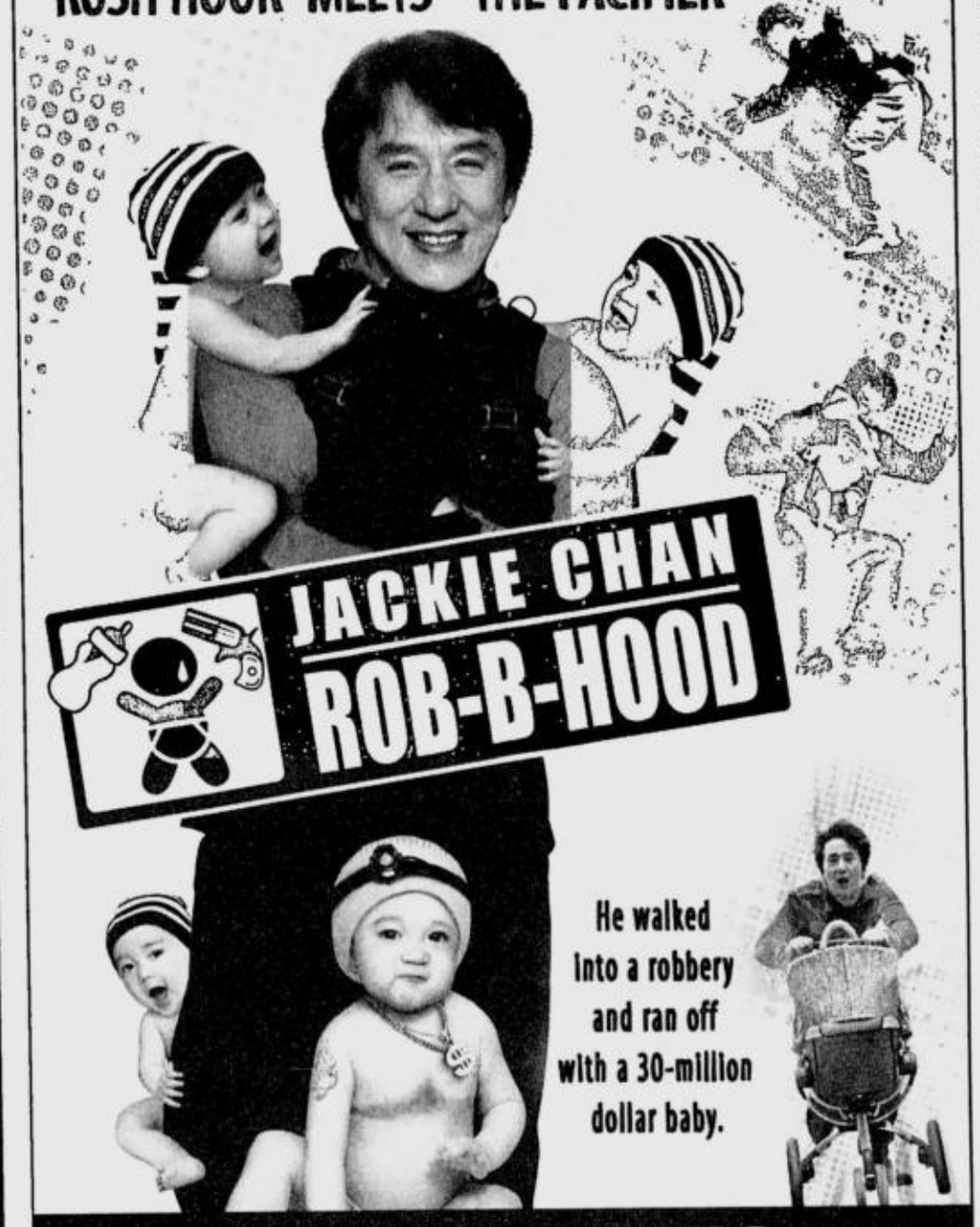
'Treasures' unlocked today

PRODUCED FOR P150 MILLION, "ASIAN Treasures" is GMA 7's most expensive production so far. The adventure series was filmed all over the Philippines, and in China, Hong Kong and Thailand. It showcases the first screen team-up of Robin Padilla and Angel Locsin.

Writer Don Michael Perez describes the show, which will have its pilot telecast tonight, as a treasure hunt where "secrets are unlocked along the way." The premise is based on historical fact, he notes, but what books can't verify, the writers have fictionalized.

MTRCB RATING: PG-13 | children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

"RUSH HOUR" MEETS "THE PACIFIER"



PHILIPPINE ENTERTA

Jesi W

By Nini Valera

"STARSTRUCK" HOPEFUL. cuera wore a bra for the firs life on Sunday for a product on GMA 7's reality talent se.

Corcuera, a self-confessed she was told by the show's pr to wear the undergarment. "I to buy me one after I received tion]," she said.

Corcuera performed a da with fellow contestants Lizzy Bernal and Rich Asuncion. T skimpy white tank tops and p showed Corcuera's cleavage, her look uncomfortable.

Backstage, she was heard about the bra. But Starstruck ber Lorna Tolentino praised h the right thing."

Corcuera survived the ch week, and remained among contenders to the titles of St mate Pair, Sweetheart and H joke has started to circulate Corcuera possibly becoming t Ultimate Sweet Hunk.

Two booted

Undoubtedly one of the p among the girls in this year's Corcuera is also one of the mo ular with the public. In the au on Sunday, she had the mos ber of fans—carrying poster ing her picture, chanting her and applauding the loudest time she came on stage. She them to clap and shout louder end of her production numbe

Booted were Lizzy Pecso Chad Burden. Pecson's elim was a letdown to some peopl earlier predicted that she make it to the finish.

No one was disappointe Burden's fall. "He would no made it to the finals," said a m of the production staff.

Starstruck Council membe glas Quijano delivered a parti for the two losers: "It's not the the world. The dream does n here. You can try again."

None of the contestants g production staff a hard time workshops last week, said member Louie Ignacio. Duri

glorietta — GREENBELT — ALABANG TOWN CENTER — AYALA CENTER CEBU — MARKET! MARKET! — Ayala Malls Lifestyle

AT THE CINEMAS

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	3 ERAGON	4 ROB-B-HOOD
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 ROB-B-HOOD	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 ERAGON	5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	6 ERAGON	7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND		2 ERAGON	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	4 ROB-B-HOOD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 BLOOD DIAMOND	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ERAGON	2 BLOOD DIAMOND	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 FEAST
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 ERAGON		2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 BLOOD DIAMOND	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	

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...JESI COR-...time in her ...ion number ...rch. ...lesbian,' said ...duction staff ...My aunt had ...the [instruc-

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Dec. 31 elimination round, Ignacio gave Corcuera, Jewel Mishe and Dave Valentino a score of 0.

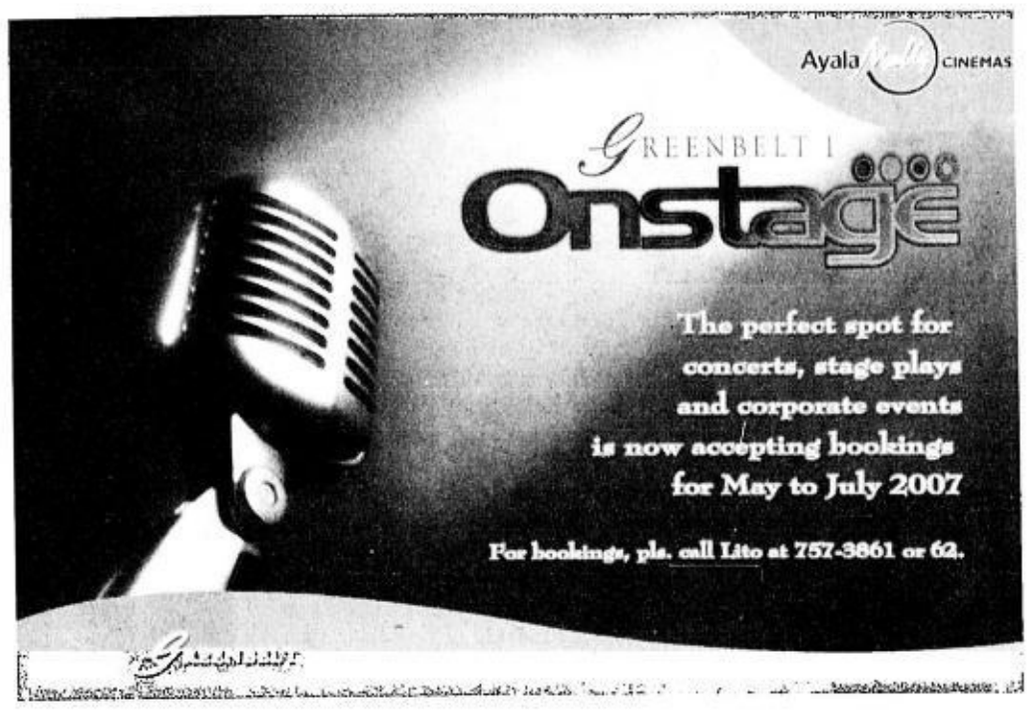
Ignacio took Mische to task on Sunday for her lackluster performance in a song number with Stef Prescott, Hazel Uy and Renee Lascana.

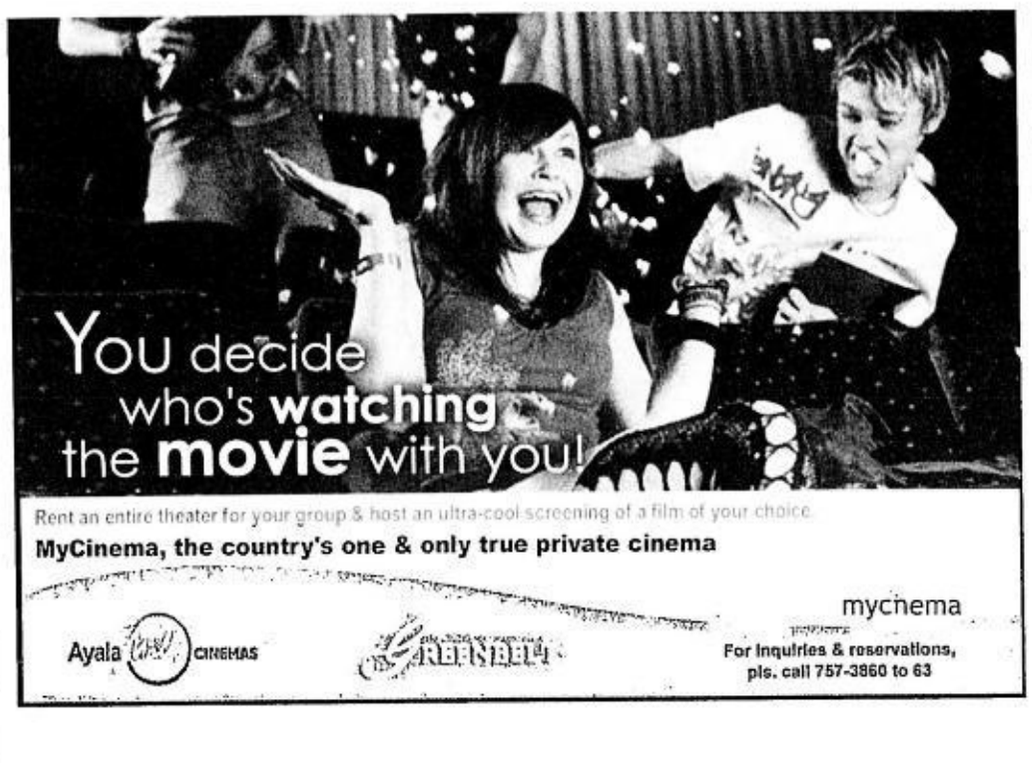
A music major at the UP Conservatory of Music, Mische clearly did not have a singing voice and botched her part in an ensemble number. She earlier told INQUIRER Entertainment that her major was Piano.

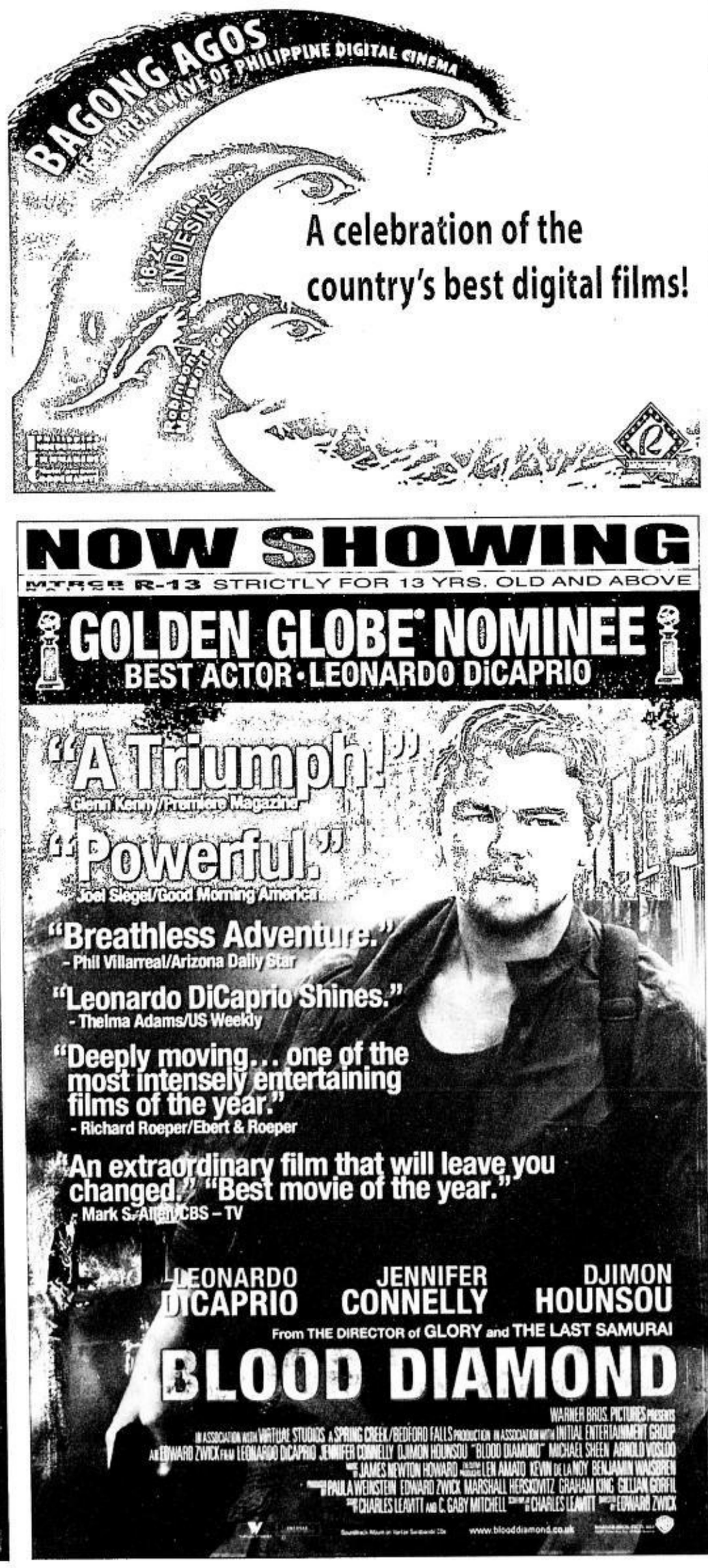
Ignacio told Mische that he would send her a videotape of her performance so she could review it and decide if she had enough talent to become a star. Ironically, Mishe was an early audience favorite.

Fifty percent of the contestants' scores come from the Starstruck Council. Text votes from the audience comprise the rest.

The public can also cast their votes through the Internet, giving overseas viewers a chance to participate. Log on to www.starstruck.tv.







SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ERAGON
MTRCB GP
12.00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

3 BLOOD DIAMOND
MTRCB R-13
12:30, 3:40, 6.50, 10:00

2 ROB-B-HOOD
MTRCB PG-13
1:15 4:00, 6:45, 9:35

4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
MTRCB PG-13
2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE — ERAGON
MTRCB GP 1:00, 3:30

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GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 2:10,5:10,8:10	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:30,4:30,7:30,10:30
ERAGON G 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:00,9:20	ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:35,3:05,5:35, 8:05,10:30	ERAGON G 1:00,3:20,5:40, 8:00,10:20

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1 ROB-B-HOOD
2:25, 5:10, 7:55, 10:40
PG-13

2 ERAGON
1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00
G

3 BLOOD DIAMOND
1:55, 5:05, 8:40, 11:20
R-13

4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13

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Griffin & Phoenix

Will 'Idol' loser be a Golden Globe champ?

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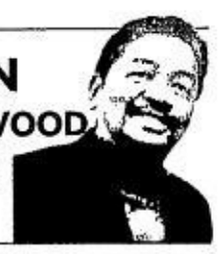


Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—WILL JENnmifer Hudson, voted off "American Idol" in Season 3 and dismissed by **Simon Cowell** as "out of her league," be named the Golden Globe Awards Best Supporting Actress on Monday?

Jennifer has been on a roll since winning the plum "Dreamgirls" role over "AI" Season 3 champion **Fantasia Barrino.** In fact, something happened for the first time when Jennifer walked into our press conference with her last November: We broke into applause to hail her tour de force "Dreamgirls" performance.

We had just seen director **Bill Condon's** movie adaptation of **Michael Bennett's** musical—a fictionalized account of the rise of **Diana Ross** and the Supremes. Something unusual also overtook us during this screening. At the end of the scene where Jennifer belted "Dreamgirls'" show-stopping ballad, "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going," we couldn't help it—we clapped as if we were watching a live musical. Those who couldn't wait for the movie's Manila run next month can listen to the soundtrack CD Sony BMG Music Entertainment is releasing in the Philippines on Monday.

Since "Dreamgirls" began its regular run at movie houses in the US, many audiences are also breaking into rousing cheers after Jennifer's powerful pop aria. She also won "breakthrough performance" citations from critics' groups.

Will Jennifer seal her vindication on Monday evening by triumphing over her equally formidable Best Supporting Actress Awardees **Adriana Barraza** and **Rinko Kikuchi** (both from "Babel"), **Emily Blunt** ("The Devil Wears Prada") and **Cate Blanchett** ("Notes On A Scandal")?

DreamWorks/Paramount Pictures started building buzz for "Dreamgirls" February last year. We visited the set and watched Jennifer, **Beyoncé Knowles** and **Anika Noni Rose** shimmy in sparkling red dresses as they were "Steppin' to the Bad Side." We met them later in a party tent behind Orpheum Theatre, the restored movie palace in downtown LA, which subbed for Motown.

ANIKA Noni Rose as Lorrell Robinson, Beyonce Knowles as Deena Jones and Jennifer Hudson as Effie White

The Dreams

In March, we sat down with some of the main cast, including Beyoncé, who was quite a vision with her huge frizzy hair, sprayed with glitter, reminiscent of Diana Ross' look in some album covers. We stayed around to watch The Dreams—Beyoncé, Anika and Sharon Leal (at this point in the movie, Jennifer's character is replaced, despite her grand aria) do take after take of "One Night Only," a fully choreographed number complete with disco dancers.

In our third meeting with Jennifer last November, she was more confident. Asked if she has gotten in touch with her former "AI" tormentor since her star-making turn in this film, Jennifer said, smiling, "I have not talked to Simon but I would like to. We can go to lunch and I'll treat (laughter). I just hope he's proud of me."

Since our interview, Simon appeared via tape in a "Dreamgirls" edition of "Oprah" and described Jennifer's performance as "extraordinary." He quipped, "Please thank me when you get your Oscar."

To be able to tell them that she is indeed not going (away), Jennifer had to take Diva 101 classes from director Condon. The ex-"AI" wannabe revealed, "Bill said, 'You're too nice, too polite. You need to be a little rude and take charge.' I had to put Jennifer aside and become Effie."

Beyoncé, a knockout at this Beverly Hilton Hotel press con in a turtleneck mini and diamond-studded platinum hoop earrings, seemed game that Jennifer had run away with the film by default because the latter's character, Effie, gets to sing the blow-the-roof-off anthem. Beyoncé, however, has a good, intense ballad, "Listen," which she co-composed and for which she is up for a Golden Globe Award in the Best Original Song category. She is also in the running for Best Actress in a Comedy or Musical.

Beyoncé admitted, "Whenever anyone asks (me) about the movie, they say, 'How's 'And I Am Telling You…'? Because that's the moment in the 1980s when you were in the theater (watching 'Dreamgirls') and everyone stood up.' That's what made the play so legendary. So Jennifer had a lot of pressure. When I watched that scene in the film, I, like everyone else, was completely blown away."

On Diana Ross, the inspiration for her character, Beyoncé disclosed, "I actually did run into Diana Ross while we were filming. I was so nervous; I had been studying her for so long. It was like she wasn't real. I could see her hair in my peripheral vision. She came next to me and tapped me because I guess she could feel that I was nervous to say anything to her. I didn't know how she felt about this movie. She said, 'I'm a big fan and I'm happy that you're in 'Dreamgirls.' 'That made me feel like I could breathe again."

Strong contender

Eddie Murphy, looking very dapper in a black suit, spoke to the print press for the first time in quite a while (he usually only does the TV media). It probably helped that the buzz for his portrayal of a singer on his way down is strong. Eddie, who displays his singing talents in this movie, is a strong contender in the Globes' Best Supporting Actor race.

Eddie was a bit serious, although he did make some quips, as when he talked about his singing prowess: "This is the first musical that I've been in. But in the '80s, I put out a couple of music records that weren't very well-received (laughter). I took that as a hint that the audience was like, 'We don't want you singing (laughter)."

Since Eddie heard **Jennifer Holliday** sing her legendary performance of "And I Am…" in the original Broadway production of "Dreamgirls" in the '80s, he was asked to comment on Holliday and Hudson: "I saw the play like four or five times because the first time I saw it, I didn't remember anything after Jennifer Holliday sang that song. She sang that song in the middle of the play and the audience went crazy. It's like half a play."

JENNIFER HUDSON in "Dreamgirls"

WITH co-star Jamie Foxx

He continued, "I think what Jennifer Hudson brings to Effie that was not in the original is that Jennifer Hudson has a sensuality about her. Jennifer Holliday has a great voice. She could belt it out. But Jennifer Hudson has sex appeal. I can believe that Jamie's character, Curtis, is going after her. There are certain songs in the black community that you don't even attempt to sing over again. That song is like a Luther Vandross song. It's like no black artist even touches Luther's music. You're going to be booed off the stage. But Jennifer Hudson cracked that song out of the park. She made it hers."

Jamie Foxx, in contrast to Eddie's sharp, suave look, was dressed down in a white shirt, blue jeans and a scarf tied around his neck. We told Jamie that it must have been hard to be in character and pretend to be not moved by Jennifer's heart-wrenching song of protest.

Jamie, who is quite a singer himself (he sings "When I First Saw You" as a solo and as a duet with Beyoncé), responded: "They have the camera on me and she's singing off-camera the first time she does it. I say, you got to stop (filming) because I'm supposed to be tough and she was absolutely incredible when she was singing that song. So every time she sang it, I had to stay angry or mad in that character. It peels the skin off your body when you're listening to that song. To see her not just as this character but this girl who didn't make it in 'American Idol,' that was so dynamic and powerful."

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

Censors may lift ban on Erap film bio

MANILA—THE PHILIPPINE FILM censors board agreed on Wednesday to lift a ban on a biographical film about deposed president Joseph Estrada if certain changes were made.

But Estrada's lawyer said the proposed alterations, which include removing the portions challenging the legality of Estrada's ouster, were not acceptable.

DID YOU KNOW...

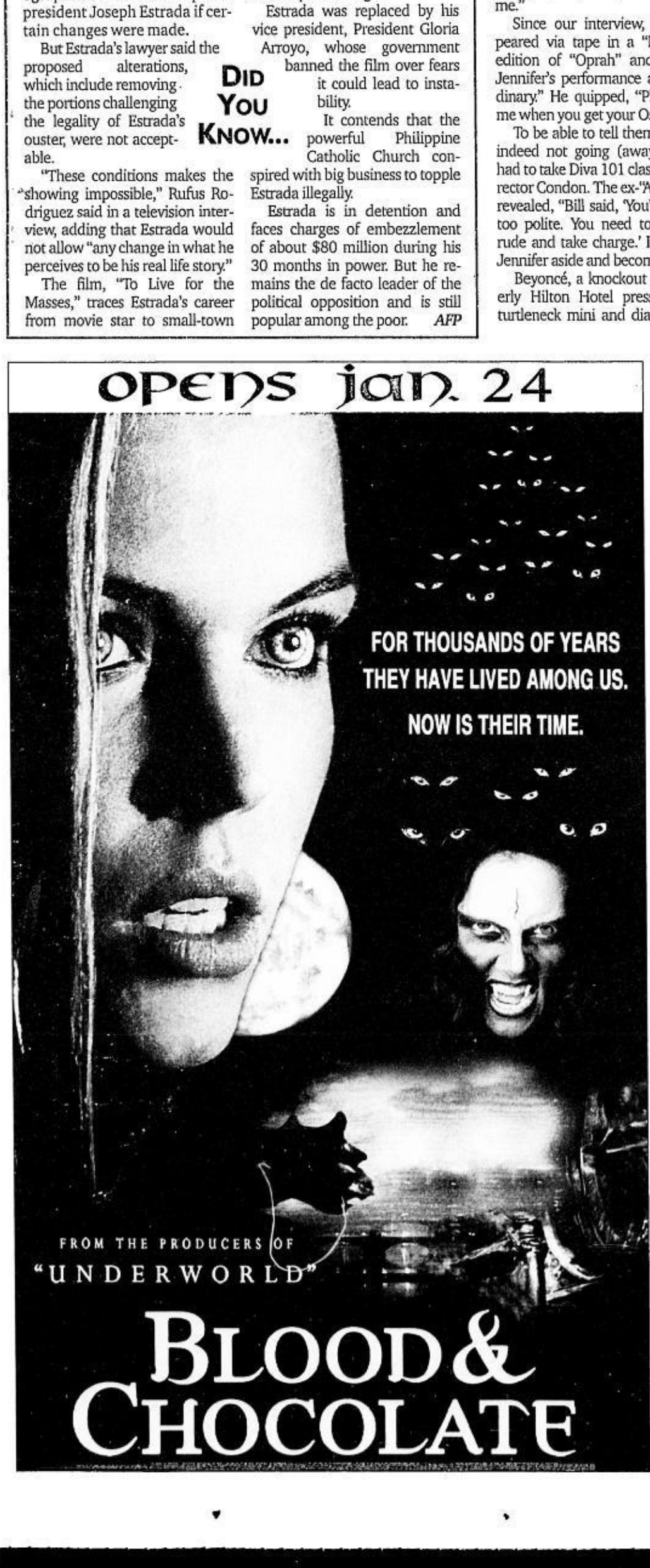
"These conditions makes the showing impossible," Rufus Rodriguez said in a television interview, adding that Estrada would not allow "any change in what he perceives to be his real life story."

The film, "To Live for the Masses," traces Estrada's career from movie star to small-town mayor to Philippine president elected by a landslide in 1998, ending with his ouster in the face of corruption charges.

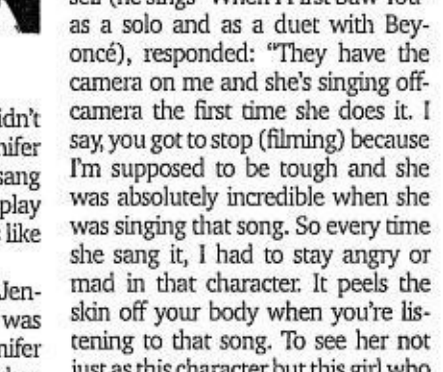
Estrada was replaced by his vice president, President Gloria Arroyo, whose government banned the film over fears it could lead to instability.

It contends that the powerful Philippine Catholic Church conspired with big business to topple Estrada illegally.

Estrada is in detention and faces charges of embezzlement of about $80 million during his 30 months in power. But he remains the de facto leader of the political opposition and is still popular among the poor. *AFP*



BRITNEY Spears and Paris Hilton in file photos REUTERS



EVA Longoria, "Favorite Female TV Star" AFP

Best friends top 'Worst-Dressed' list

LOS ANGELES— CALLED "STYLE-FREE and fashion deprived," current best pals Britney Spears and Paris Hilton tied for the No. 1 spot on Mr. Blackwell's 47th annual "Worst Dressed" list released Tuesday. Blackwell dubbed the two celebutantes "Screamgirls."

He scolded actress Lindsay Lohan for turning "from adorable to deplorable"; called Christina Aguilera, "all crass and no class"; Paula Abdul, "a fallen fashion idol"; Sharon Stone, "over-the-hill Cruella DeVille"; and Sandra Oh, "layered lunacy from head to toe." And Meryl Streep's wardrobe? "Pure mother of the bride." *AP*

People's Choice Awards

LOS ANGELES—Winners of the 33rd annual People's Choice Awards, given out Tuesday night include:

Movies: Female Star, Jennifer Aniston; Male Star, Johnny Depp; Leading Lady, Cameron Diaz; Leading Man, Vince Vaughn; Female Action Star, Halle Berry; Male Action Star, Johnny Depp; On-Screen Matchup, Johnny Depp and Keira Knightley; Funny Male Star, Robin Williams.

Television: Female Star, Eva Longoria; Male Star, Patrick Dempsey; Talk Show Host, Ellen DeGeneres; Funny Female Star, Ellen DeGeneres. *AP*

RUSHES

Tip from Angelina

PARIS— Film star Angelina Jolie says she was horrified by attacks on Madonna about her adoption of a toddler from Malawi but suggested the pop singer took a risk because of the African country's adoption laws, a French magazine reported.

"In that country, there isn't really a legal framework for adopting," Jolie was quoted as saying in this week's edition of Gala, a gossip magazine. "Personally, I prefer to stay on the side of the law."

Jolie and actor Brad Pitt have three children: Maddox, adopted from Cambodia; Zahara, adopted from Ethiopia; and another daughter, Shiloh, who was born in May. *AP*

JENNIFER Aniston at

Hands-off partner

HONG KONG—Celebrity Japanese chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa said Wednesday his fellow investor in the upscale restaurant chain Nobu, American actor Robert De Niro, is a hands-off partner who focuses on acting and doesn't make menu suggestions. *AP*

It's a girl!

LOS ANGELES — It's a girl for television host Brooke Burke and actor-singer David Charvet.

Burke, 35, gave birth Monday to Heaven Rain Charvet in Santa Monica, her publicist Nancy Iannios said.

It was the third child for Burke, who has daughters Neriah, 6, and Sierra Sky, 4, with former husband Garth Fisher, a plastic surgeon. *AP*

ANGELINA Jolie and Brad Pitt

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

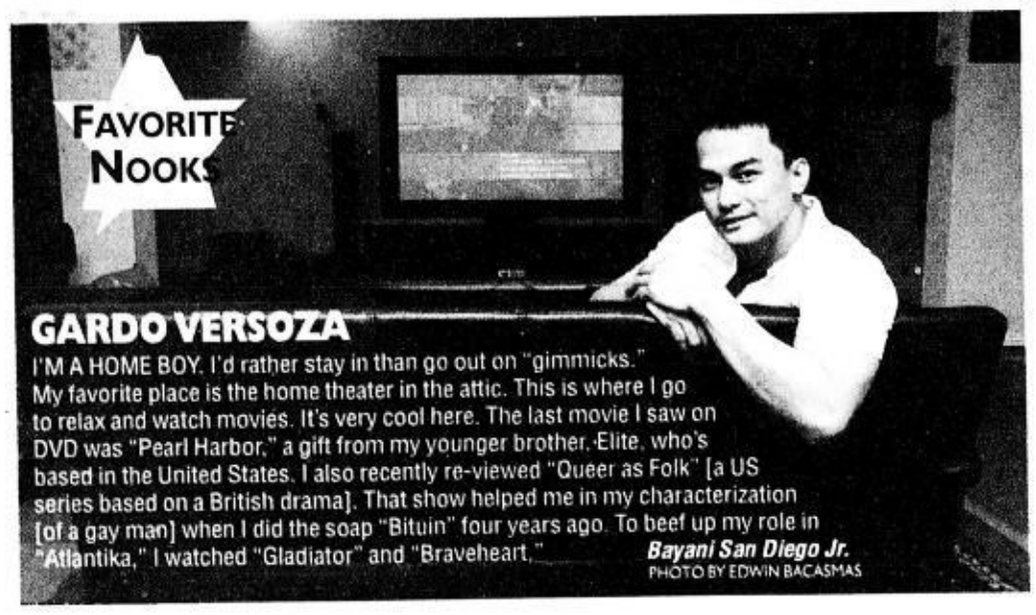
sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

LIVING Stars

HOME BODY

"I'M NOT BITTER," singer-actress Ara Mina jokes as she points to the intricate wrought-iron candle holder, a gift from ex-boyfriend Jomari Yllana. In her "house filled with gifts," there's also an angel figurine that stands out from a huge collection because it came from ... guess who? For the answer, and more of Ara's Californian-style home, turn to page F/4. PHOTO BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

FAVORITE NOOKS



GARDO VERSOZA

I'M A HOME BOY. I'd rather stay in than go out on "gimmicks." My favorite place is the home theater in the attic. This is where I go to relax and watch movies. It's very cool here. The last movie I saw on DVD was "Pearl Harbor," a gift from my younger brother, Elite, who's based in the United States. I also recently re-viewed "Queer as Folk" [a US series based on a British drama]. That show helped me in my characterization [of a gay man] when I did the soap "Bituin" four years ago. To beef up my role in "Atlantika," I watched "Gladiator" and "Braveheart." ***Bayani San Diego Jr.***

PHOTO BY EDWIN BACASMAS

TAIL TALES

RUFA MAE QUINTO

PRINCE IS A POMERANIAN. I love him a lot. He's very beautiful! When I go shopping at the Tiendesitas in Pasig, I sometimes buy cute little costumes and accessories for him. It can be expensive, so I try to control myself. It's like having a real baby! Prince keeps me company. At least, I'm no longer alone in my house. When he sees me, he gets very excited. It's as if he's going crazy, running around in circles until he gets dizzy. He always makes me laugh.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

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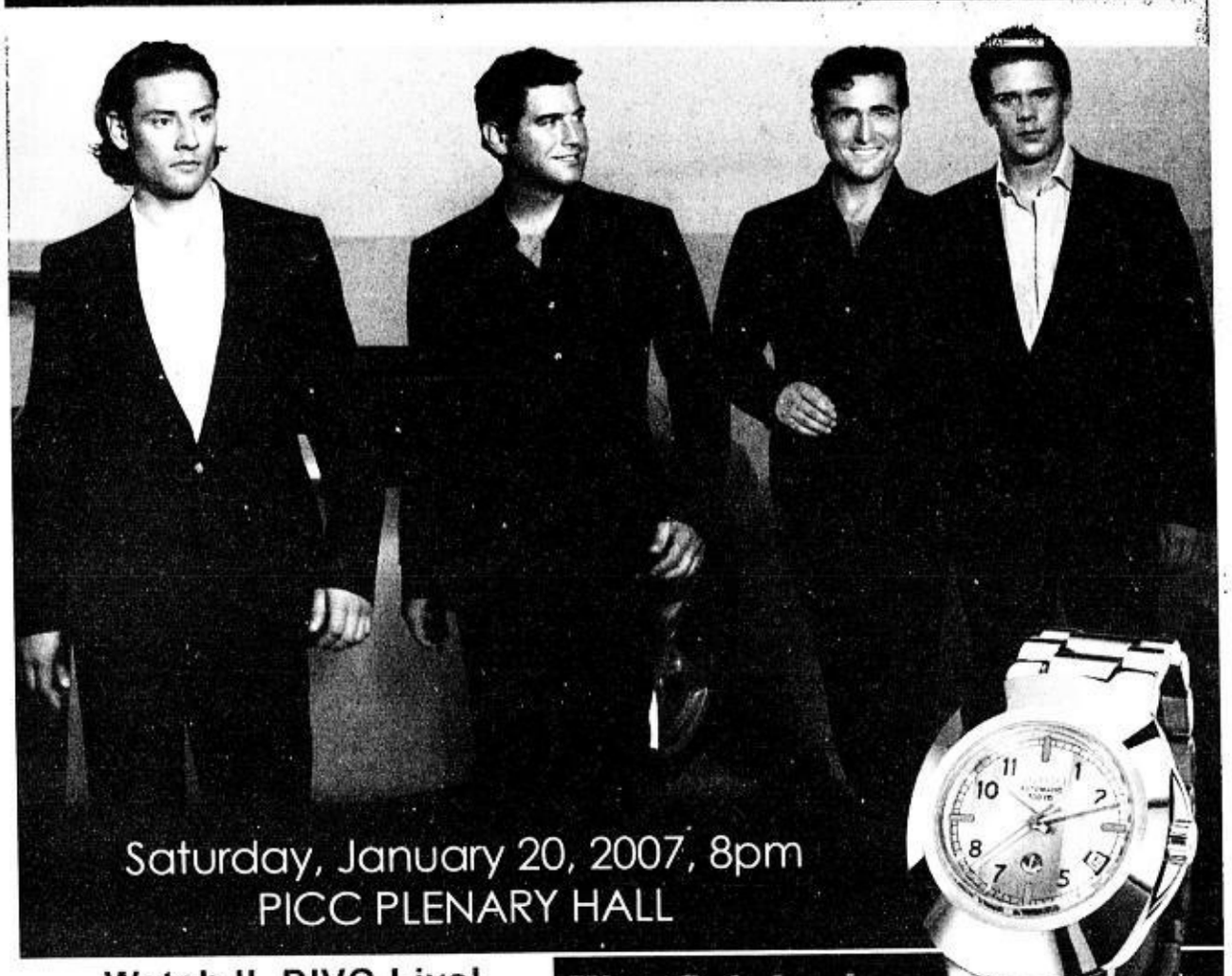

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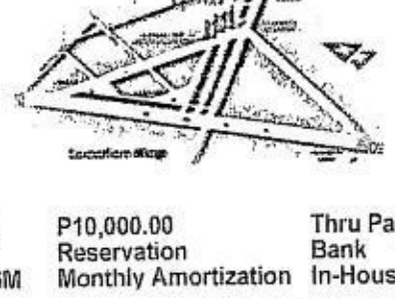

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MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

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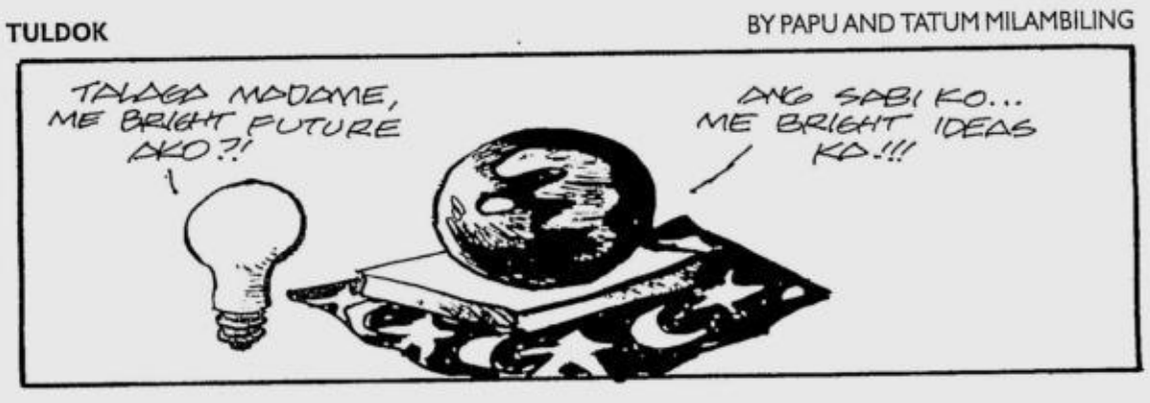
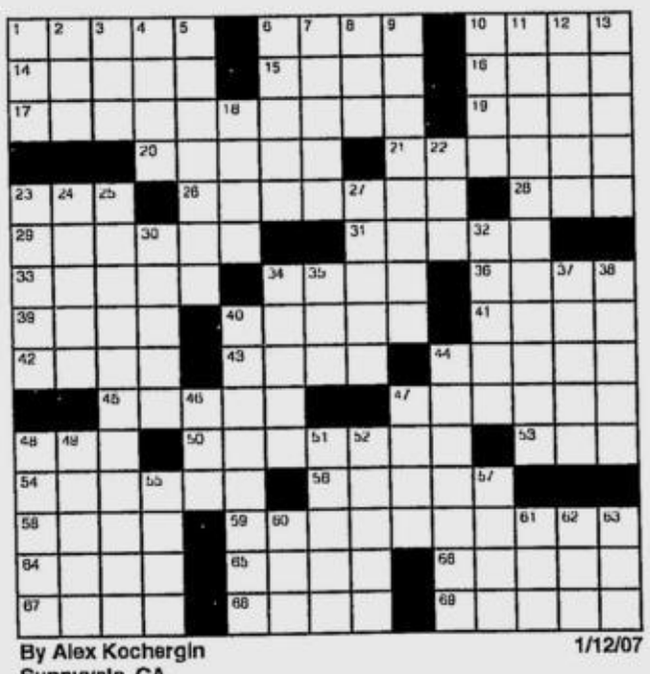


BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alex Kochergin
Sunnyvale, CA

1/12/07

ACROSS
1 Fit for a king
6 "The best __ plans..."
10 Mimics
14 First name of a plane?
15 __ breve
16 Spread slowly
17 Hoover's former name?
19 Spanish river
20 Colander
21 Language of Lebanon
23 4 of dates
26 Proximal
28 Albanian cash
29 Bush or Burns
31 Act division
33 Brogan binders
34 In __ (undisturbed)
36 Nile bird
39 Sommer of films
40 Footwear
41 Bird abode
42 Herbal drinks
43 Lion's colf
44 Put a stop to
45 Neighbor of Tibet
47 Slipup
48 Universal meas.
50 "The Music Man" star
53 One of the girls
54 Most virtuous
56 Flambeau
58 At the zenith
59 Salisbury Plain sight
64 Musical Porter
65 QED word
66 WWW letters
67 __ Stanley Gardner
68 Josip Broz
69 Indications

DOWN
1 CSA soldier
2 Lennon's love
3 Thee, today
4 "..._ right with the world"
5 Cargos
6 Insect stage
7 Birch relative
8 Dockers' org.
9 Syrian capital
10 On the Aegean
11 Annual golf pro-am site
12 Spooky
13 Kirk's cohort
18 Extra-wide shoe
22 66 is one
23 Shoelace end
24 U.S. painter Rembrandt
25 Elvis's genre
27 Cosmetician Lauder
30 Actress Witherspoon
32 Golf course halves
34 Sedimentary rock
35 Charged particle
37 Matter of contention
38 Guide
40 Intellectual elite
44 Sure things
46 2nd letter add-on
47 Additional amount
48 Parking spot
49 One-on-one teacher
51 Summer ermine
52 Lone Ranger's pal
55 Three-sided rapier
57 Half: pref.
60 Cycle starter?
61 Old horse
62 Rummy game
63 Golfer Ernie

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

U	R	S	A		R	O	A	M		G	H	O	S	T
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1/12/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a strong sense of adventure. You have high ethics and principles. You're inspired by a dedication to serve others. In fact, you're capable of great self-sacrifice. You often identify with a cause you value. People love your company because you're a great storyteller. If you work hard to build and construct something this year, rewards will soon follow.
Birthdate of: Kirstie Alley, actress; Howard Stern, radio host; Oliver Platt, actor

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might make a new friend today, perhaps someone from a different country or a different background. Contacts with others will definitely expand your horizons.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Parents, bosses and VIPs are friendly today! People are not only in a position to help you, they are willing to do so as well. It's a great day.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your appreciation of beauty is definitely heightened today. Visit museums, galleries, beautiful shops, parks or take a drive in nature. Enjoy your world.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The wealth of others will benefit you today. Keep your pockets open. Someone could give you a gift or do a favor for you. Romantic relationships can heat up today!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a marvelous day to enjoy the company of close friends and partners. All your dealings with the general public will be smooth and friendly as well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Coworkers are unusually supportive today. Have good times during the lunch hour. People want to help each other today, and this is a good thing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Romance, love affairs, parties, vacations and fun times get the green light today! You feel good about life; you want to share your happiness with others. By all means, pass it along.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an excellent day for real estate matters. It's also a good day to make where you live look more attractive. You might want to shop for beautiful things.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): All your dealings with others, especially siblings, will be friendly and easygoing today. People are in a good mood. This is an excellent day for negotiations, signing contracts and all kinds of business.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Business and commerce are definitely favored today. There's money in them thar hills! Think of ways to boost your income. Shopping will please you as well

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a good day to shop for wardrobe items. You like what you see in the mirror. Relations with others are smooth and diplomatic.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You'll enjoy time alone or time with others today—it's your choice. Because you feel benevolent toward others, you'll help someone who is less fortunate (if you can).

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

		1		8				
			7		2			
		9	3			7		1
	2					5	4	
5				9				6
	8	4					3	
3		7			5	1		
			6		1			
				2		3		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

1/12

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	3	2	4	7	9	8	6	1
6	4	7	1	2	8	3	9	5
9	8	1	6	5	3	4	2	7
3	6	9	5	1	2	7	4	8
8	1	5	9	4	7	2	3	6
7	2	4	8	3	6	5	1	9
2	9	3	7	6	5	1	8	4
1	5	6	3	8	4	9	7	2
4	7	8	2	9	1	6	5	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

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RED CARPET

People's Choice Awards

REUTERS

KATHERINE HEIGL

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ELLEN DeGeneres with her partner Portia de Rossi REUTERS

REUTERS

QUEEN LATIFAH

'Happyness' premiere, Germany

WILL SMITH horses around with his son Jaden at the Berlin premiere of Italian director Gabriele Muccino's "Das Streben nach Glueck." REUTERS

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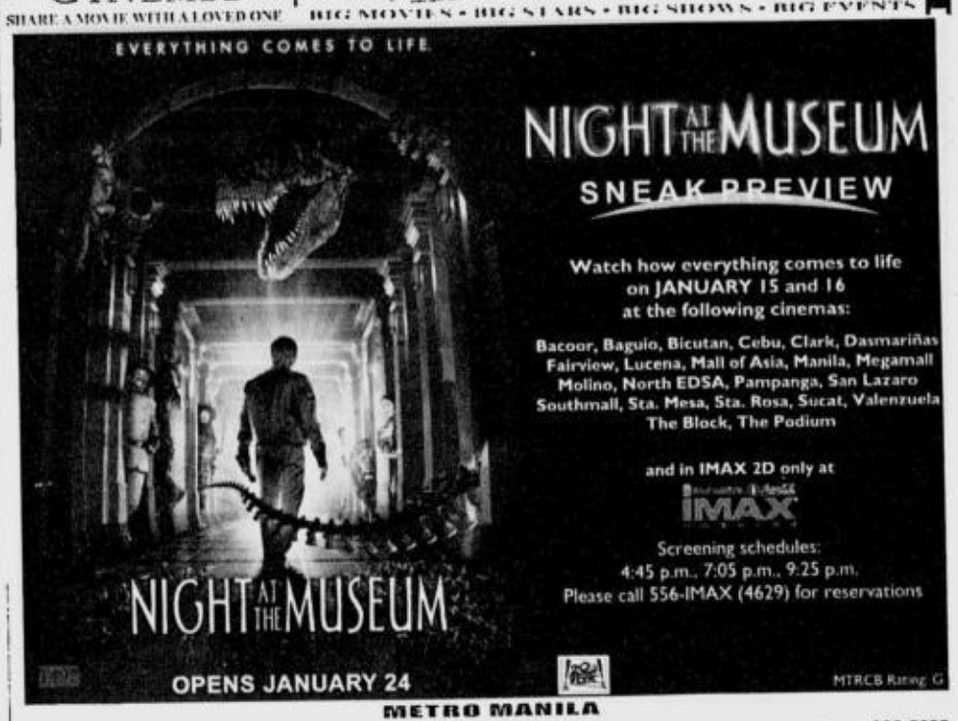

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1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
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5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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CINEMA 2
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1 ERAGON
2 MANO PO 5
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5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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7 ERAGON
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 ERAGON
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
8 MANO PO 5
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 LIGALIG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 ROB-B-HOOD
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 MANO PO 5

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
8 LIGALIG
9 MANO PO 5
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 ERAGON
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
9 MANO PO 5

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ERAGON
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ERAGON
7 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 MANO PO 5
11 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4322201-04
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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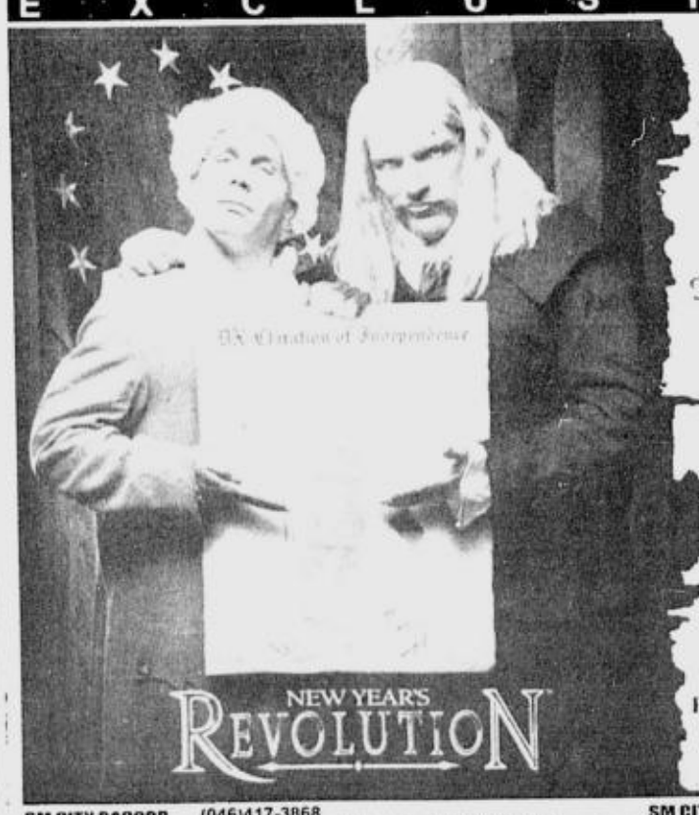

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MANO PO 5
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

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ERAGON
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BLOOD DIAMOND
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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ENTENG KABISOTE 3
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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ERAGON
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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ERAGON
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ENTENG KABISOTE 3
ERAGON
MANO PO 5
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 ERAGON • THX
2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 ERAGON
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
5 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
7 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
9 MANO PO 5
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
10 LIGALIG
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 ERAGON
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:35 9:00
2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:35 3:40 6:45 9:50
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
6 ROB-B-HOOD
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
7 ERAGON
12:30 3:00 5 20 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 / 682-8194
1 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
4 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:35 6 20 9:05
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:00 6:40 9:00
6 ERAGON
11:00 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00
7 ERAGON
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
8 BLOOD DIAMOND
11:20 2:30 5:40 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3211 / 935-3228-30
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

PIONEER 687-5378
1 ERAGON
1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:05 2.55 5 45 8:35
3 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20
4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

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STA ROSA (049) 837-0807
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 LIGALIG
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

LIPA (043) 757-3684 / (043) 312-5870
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KAMASUTRA 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 / (046) 416-4332
1 LIGALIG
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 MANO PO 5

IMUS (046) 875-3838 / (046) 471-8188
1 KAMASUTRA 3
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 / (045) 961-5270
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 ERAGON

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2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ERAGON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3/SHAKE RATTLE
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6 THE RETURN

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3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 THE RETURN
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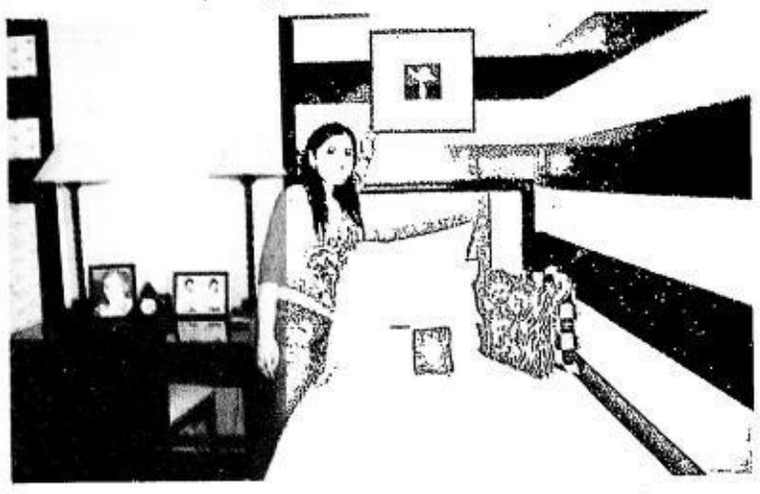
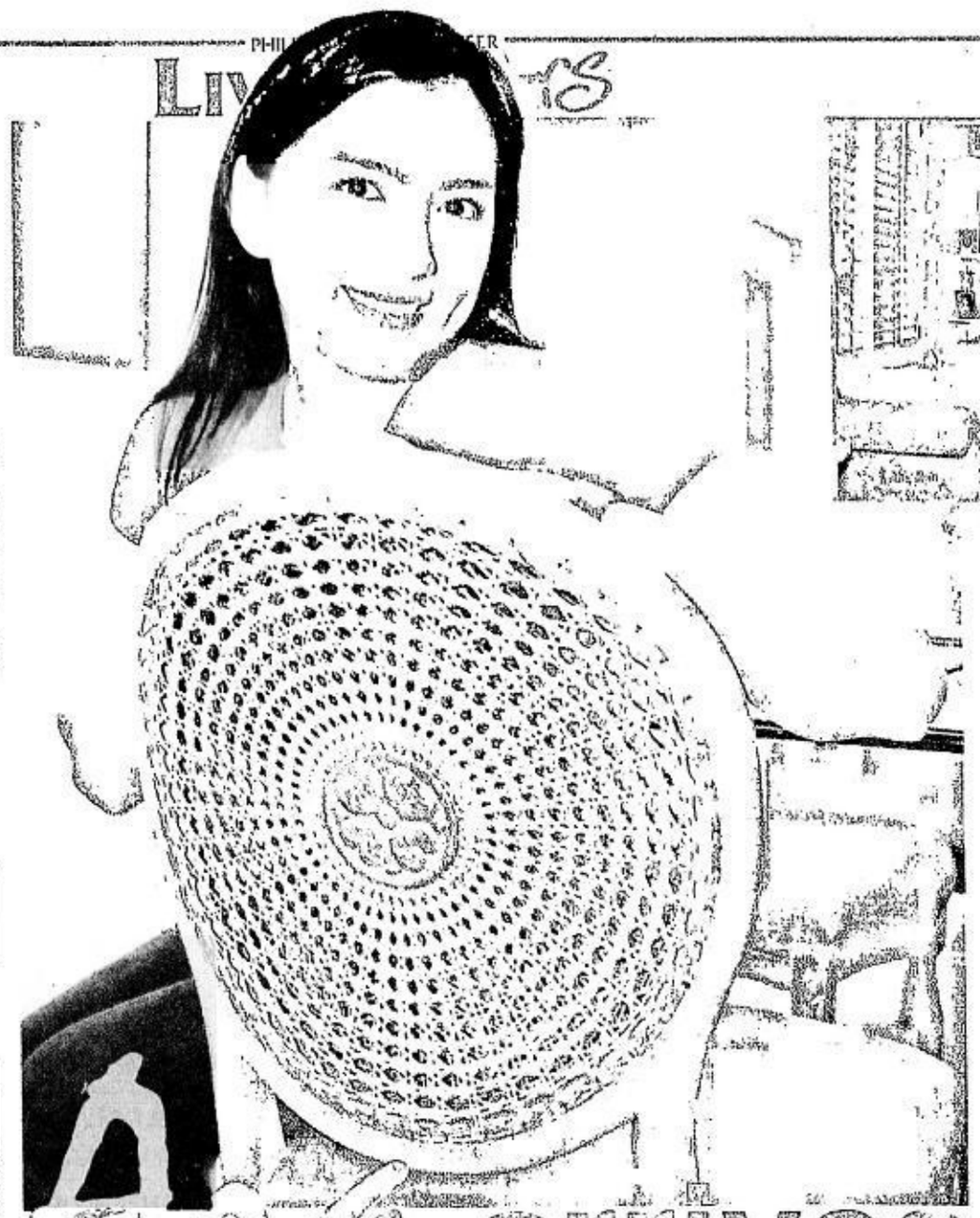
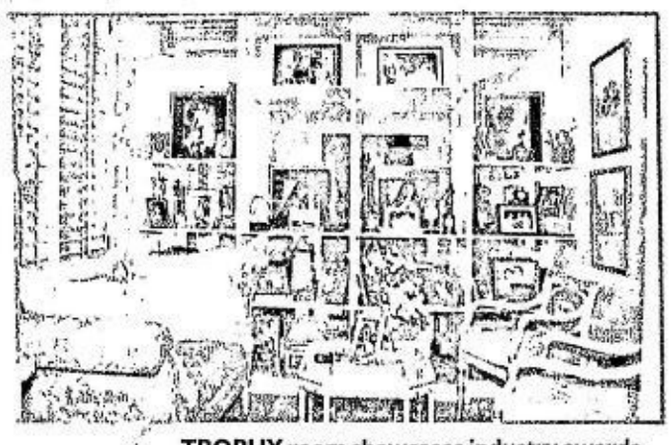
THE LIVING room, as envisioned by Ara and designer Cynthia Almario, is "Californian"—cheerful hues and classy lines. The sofa and chairs were especially designed for the owner of the house.



THE SULTRY singer-actress says she has has always wanted a "masculine" nook—like this black-and-white guest room— since she was a kid, saying, "I was boyish then."



Ara arrives home



TROPHY room showcases industry awards, and snapshots with different celebrities—from Piolo Pascual to Goofy.

FRED Baldemor painted Ara's nude, which hangs in the hallway.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by August de la Cruz

HOME BODY

Sexy singer-actress also an amateur decorator

SULTRY SINGER-ACTRESS ARA MINA hired professional interior decorator Cynthia Almario to dress up her home, but she also put in a lot of her own ideas.

"My concept was for each room to look different," Ara explains. "So the living and dining rooms are Californian, the entertainment room is Zen and modern."

Ara and Cynthia also saw eye-to-eye when it came to the "black-white" guest room.

"I've always wanted a masculine room," Ara recounts. "I was tomboyish as a kid. I played with male cousins. I didn't like Barbie dolls and was into *trumpo* (tops), *teks* (playing cards) and toy cars."

In fact, she has built quite a collection of toy cars which she now displays in the entertainment room.

Alongside the toy cars are angel figurines—most of which are gifts from fans and friends. In the living room, she has installed an Oriental armoire where more angel figurines are kept.

She has likewise accumulated a dizzying array of scents—which she stores in the dressing room, also dubbed "perfume room."

"Cynthia might scold me on her next visit because I've hoarded a lot of stuff. I'm very sentimental *kasi*. I display everything, to show my friends how much I value their gifts," Ara says.

Case in point: She didn't banish the wrought-iron candle holder given by ex-boyfriend Jomari Yllana to the *bodega* (warehouse).

"I'm not bitter," Ara jokes.

Quite tellingly, the angel figurine displayed prominently in the dining room is a gift from the mother of her current beau, Polo Ravales.

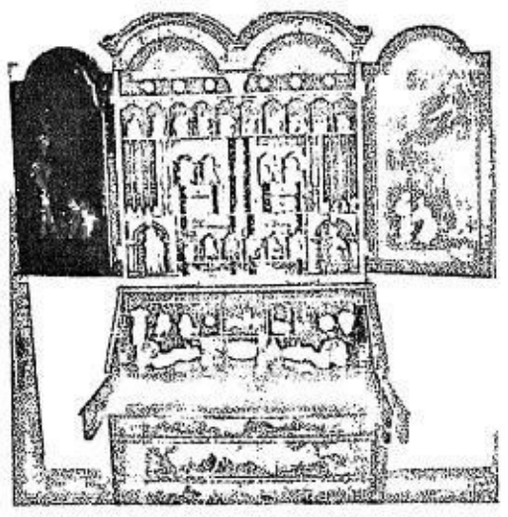
"This house is filled with gifts," Ara quips.

She jests that this dream home is a product of three Ps—"*pagod, puyat at pawis*" (slaving, sleepless nights and sweat).

These days, Ara is again sweating buckets as she prepares for her big Araneta concert, "Loving Ara @ 15" on Feb. 3.

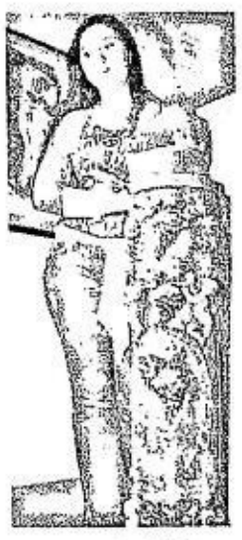
"I'm always out. I miss my home," she sighs.

Once her work schedule eases up, Ara hopes to take a formal course in interior design.



IN THIS Oriental armoire is her collection of angel figurines—gifts from friends and fans. Stuff toy dogs are from singer LA Lopez.

WATER-BEARING statue was Ara's idea. It reminds her of her restaurant, Osteria 88, which she also decorated.



She bought this huge candle from Sari-Sari.

THE cherished product of "*pagod, puyat at pawis*" (slaving, sleepless nights and sweat).

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CINEMA 4 ERAGON 10:30 . 12:55 . 3:20 5:45 . 8:10 . 10:35 GP
CINEMA 5 BLOOD DIAMOND 10:30 . 1:25 . 4:20 7:15 . 10:10 R-13
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Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

WORLD / A22

Rocket hits US
Embassy in Athens; no one hurt

NEWS / A4

Oil firms cut gas
prices by 50¢ per liter

NEWS / A10

Government raises
economic growth forecast to 6.7% in 2007

SUPER/ C4

Ode to Joel Tantoco, one
of most well-loved, and how much he loved back

It's a picnic, a wedding, fireworks for VIP ladies

CEBU CITY—IT WON'T just be a picnic in the park for the spouses of Asia-Pacific leaders this weekend—it'll also be fireworks, sumptuous meals, a choreographed "boat ballet."

IT'S A PICNIC/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, January 13, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 36 P18 website: inquirer.net

Scholar: Koran not lost in Maranao translation

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE MARANAO VERSION OF THE KORAN IS NOT a "corrupted translation," according to Taha Basman, president of the Philippine Islamic Council.

Basman is incensed with the criticism made by Muslim scholar, Ustadz Muhammad Sulaiman, who had called attention to Sheikh Abdul Aziz Guroalim Saromantang's translation of the

SCHOLAR/ A6

RP's 'moment of glory'

Asean set to write charter like EU's

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

CEBU CITY (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo yesterday basked in the Philippines "moment of glory" as host of the 12th Asean Summit that later in the day endorsed a proposal to begin writing a charter for an integrated regional bloc similar to the European Union.

The President arrived at the Mactan International Airport at 10:43 a.m. and was whisked immediately to the Mactan Shangri-La Hotel where the other VIPs of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations were lodged and the high power meetings were to be held.

"This year, the Philippines captures a moment of glory as the hub and gateway of partnership and cooperation in Asean and the whole East Asian region, as we push forward in one heave of leadership to uplift the lives of the people and preserve their greater safety and security," Ms Arroyo said in a statement.

"The future looks brighter for the region under the collective stewardship of committed leaders reaching out to each

RP'S MOMENT/ A9

SMILING FACES: School is out in Cebu for the duration of the 3-day Asean summit the better for all Cebuanos, particularly the kids, to welcome the VIPs and savor that fiesta feeling.

REM ZAMORA

FVR, Ermita on Estrada release: Let court decide

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. Ramos, a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, cautioned against the temporary release of Joseph Estrada as her chief of staff Michael Defensor has proposed.

Asked by reporters upon his arrival yesterday in Cebu to attend the Asean summit whether he was in favor of fresh efforts to release Estrada on recognizance, Ramos said: "Let the courts decide. It's as simple as that."

For Ramos, it would be prudent for the Arroyo administration to take a hands-off stance on the matter.

"We should leave it to the courts, because the courts even rule on his (Estrada's) nine-hour pass, you know," Ramos said.

At the House, two administra-

FVR, ERMITA/ A6

Summit a showcase for Cebu furniture

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—WHAT DO BRAD Pitt and the Asean heads of state have in common?

They are lounging in furniture pieces made by Cebu furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue.

The Hollywood actor had acquired four of Cobonpue's furniture pieces, including the bed for his son Maddox, Cobonpue said.

His firm is among the furniture companies tapped by the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit national organizing committee (NOC), to furnish the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) and to augment the suites in Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa, where the heads of state are staying.

The furniture pieces in CICC alone are valued at $70,000 (P3.42 million), Cobonpue said.

In total, some P24-million worth of furniture has been loaned to the government for use at the Asean summit meeting venues.

Ruby Babao-Salutan, execu-

SUMMIT/ A8

LONG FACES: What, welcome? Protesters wear long faces and carry huge, angry posters and streamers to declare their sentiments during a rally that marches right into a no-rally zone about 300 meters from the summit site.

REM ZAMORA

Loren's ex surrenders for gunslay

By Tarra Quismundo

THREE HOURS AFTER THE LIFE of Rafael de las Alas, 68, was ended by a shot to the head, his gunman came clean. Former Batangas governor and estranged husband of ex-Sen. Loren Legarda, Antonio "Tony" Leviste, surrendered.

"If you're still asking who is the assailant, who caused the death,

LOREN'S/ A6

Nani doubts Ombudsman's competence

By Norman Bordadora

FORMER JUSTICE SECRETARY Hernando Perez said there was no crime for which he can be prosecuted and cast doubt on the competence of his former undersecretary, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, who last week recommended the filing of criminal charges against him based on a complaint of businessman Mark Jimenez.

In a motion for reconsideration filed with the Ombudsman Thursday, Perez said the factual bases of the Ombudsman resolution recommending the filing of extortion and graft charges against him were "either false or based on inadmissible hearsays."

Perez also deplored the long delay in the handling of the complaint against him and then being given just five days to file a reply.

Seizing on the Ombudsman's statement that the delay was because of the complexities of the issues raised and the difficulty of obtaining documents, he said "the issues became complicated because the Ombudsman went out of her way and beyond her role in a preliminary investigation."

"She took it upon herself to prove what the complainant Mario B. Crespo a.k.a. Mark Jimenez failed to do. She became not only the investigator, but also the prosecutor, a role foreign to her in a preliminary investigation," the former justice secretary said.

In a complaint that he filed in 2001, Jimenez claimed that Perez had allegedly extorted $2 million from him in exchange for letting off the businessman, later Manila congressman, from executing "damaging affidavits against certain individuals" in the administration of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

In a resolution it issued last Monday, the Ombudsman recommended the filing of graft and extortion charges against Perez, his wife Rosario, brother-in-law Ramon Arceo and business associate Ernest Escaler before the Sandiganbayan.

It said the prosecutors believed there was sufficient evidence to establish that Perez et al. had committed illegal acts based on bank documents presented by Jimenez.

On the charge that he extorted money from Jimenez, Perez said the Ombudsman had chosen to

NANI DOUBTS/ A6

Terrorists plot new strikes, specify target, police warn

By Inquirer Mindanao and Dona Pazzibugan

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—POlice authorities yesterday said they had received a fresh report that another bomb attack was being planned by the group responsible for the deadly explosions here and in the cities of Cotabato and Kidapawan.

Senior Supt. Alfredo Torroctocon, city police chief, said that unlike the reports received by police prior to the Wednesday attacks that killed seven people and wounded nearly 50 others, the fresh report named a specific establishment, including its location, as target.

"But please do not publish the name of the target," Torroctocon told the INQUIRER, adding that security had been tightened in the area.

He said that the report also identified the perpetrators of

TERRORISTS/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2007

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over the eastern sections. The rest of the country will be cloudy with rains.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO. INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/12/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

New Lebanon evacuation looms

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING FOR A SECOND ROUND OF evacuation of Filipino workers from Lebanon due to the worsening security situation in that country as a result of its escalating political crisis, Vice President Noli de Castro said yesterday.

In an interview, De Castro, who is also presidential adviser on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and head of Task Force Lebanon, said he has ordered a close monitoring of the security situation in Lebanon.

Task Force Lebanon has also maintained the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to that country.

De Castro urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to immediately appoint a new Philippine ambassador to Beirut after Al Francis Bichara resigned recently to run for governor in Bicol in the May elections.

DE CASTRO: 'I hope the political crisis there will not escalate.'

The embassy is now being run by its consul general who is also set to retire.

"I hope the political crisis there will not escalate and lead to a civil war but we are anticipating ... preparing for another round of evacuation just in case, probably by sea," he said.

De Castro said the government was studying the possibility of using the Lebanon-Israel boundary as land route in case of an evacuation.

He said the land routes via Syria which were used during the last evacuation of Filipinos at the height of the war between Israel and Hezbollah forces in July to August last year might no longer be passable because of Syria's involvement in the political crisis in Lebanon.

The Lebanese opposition, led by the Iranian- and Syrian-backed Shi'a Hezbollah, has vowed to stage daily protest actions near government buildings and facilities as part of a Hezbollah-led campaign to topple Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's government and block his economic reform plans.

Protesters have camped outside Siniora's offices in central Beirut since Dec. 1 to try to force him to cede veto power to the opposition in a unity government or call early elections.

Siniora, who has Western and Saudi backing, has resisted those demands, instead announcing an economic reform package to be presented at an international donor conference in Paris.

The reforms, which aim to boost growth and ease Lebanon's $41 billion public debt, include raising the value-added tax and privatizing the mobile telecom sector—both rejected by the union confederation as damaging to workers' rights.

On Wednesday, De Castro met with officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Labor and Employment and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to assess the security situation in Lebanon.

De Castro said that Ambassador Roy Cimatu, head of the Philippine Middle East Preparedness Committee, and a representative from the OWWA, will leave for Lebanon this week to further assess the security situation, identify the location of OFWs there, and revise the contingency plan, including the identification of viable exit routes should an evacuation of OFWs becomes necessary.

The Vice President also directed OWWA Administrator Marianito Roque to prioritize the repatriation of 'run-away' OFWs now staying at the Adlieh Immigration Detention Center and at the Filipino Workers Resource Center.

Task Force Lebanon has also warned the public against availing the services of illegal recruiters promising jobs in Lebanon as the POEA was no longer processing work contracts of Lebanon-bound OFWs.

De Castro lamented that many OFWs who were repatriated to the Philippines last year at the height of the war in Lebanon returned there as illegal workers.

He said that without a valid work contract, the welfare of the illegal entrants might be difficult to assure.

320 RP peacekeepers leaving for Liberia, Haiti; pay cut issue still unresolved

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE PHILIPPINES WILL SEND 320 troops to Liberia and Haiti by the end of the month as part of the United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Armed Forces Vice Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Antonio Romero presided over the send-off ceremonies held yesterday at the Camp Aguinaldo headquarters for 165 troops bound for Liberia and 155 others for Haiti.

The Liberia contingent headed by Col. Francisco Patrimonio will leave on Jan. 24, while the Haiti contingent led by Col. Romeo Gan will leave for Haiti on Jan. 29.

They will replace the same number of troops whose six-month tour of duty in those two countries is about to end.

A military spokesperson would not say if the military would again take a cut from the UN-sponsored allowances of the latest batch of Filipino peacekeepers.

The military has come under fire from its own soldiers when it slashed the soldiers' troop cost allowance (TCA) by as much as 40 percent starting January 2006.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, head of the AFP public information office, said they would issue an "official statement" on the matter soon.

Last May, the military admitted it took a cut from the $1,000 monthly TCA received by each peacekeeper, saying this would cover the cost of sending them abroad.

Col. Dante Balao, head of the AFP Peacekeeing Operations Center, said a "study committee" has found that the military loses as much as P4 million whenever it sends a 165-man contingent abroad for a six-month tour of duty.

He said expenses for uniforms and other personal gear, training and vaccinations were not reimbursed by the UN.

The AFP ruled instead that soldiers deployed to peacekeeping missions would get a monthly allowance equivalent to three times their base pay, while officers would get two and a half times their base pay.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has asked the Military to restore the allowances, even as Philippine ambassador to the United Nations Lauro Baja Jr. weighed in on the controversy which he said was causing "demoralization."

The Philippines started sending troops to join UN peacekeeping missions in 2000 after a 40-year break.

Aside from Liberia and Haiti, it has also sent peacekeeping troops to the Ivory Coast, Burundi, Sudan and East Timor.

The Philippines also has a small peacekeeping force in East Timor sponsored by the European Union.

Gonzalez: Suspension order on 8 BI employees to be issued Monday

By Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ said he will suspend starting Monday about eight employees of the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology for the questionable release of suspected Vietnamese-American terrorist Vo Van Duc, while investigations on the involvement of at least three top-level immigration officials are continuing.

Gonzalez was acting on the findings of a DOJ panel which looked into reports by Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers that rampant graft and gross mismanagement in Bureau of Immigration has led to the illegal release and deportation of aliens facing criminal charges in the Philippines.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, Gonzalez said the suspension order would be released Monday and it would cover middle to low-level officials who allegedly connived to release from jail and deport Duc, alias Vinh Nguyen, who is believed to have returned to the country to sow terror during the Asean Summit in Cebu this week.

Gonzalez said those to be suspended were found to have falsified Duc's medical records then brought the suspected terrorist to a posh hotel before he was deported.

Duc was arrested by agents of the BI late 2001 along with Vietnamese-Swiss Hyunh Thuan Ngok "for overstaying," engaging in unauthorized political activities and possession of explosives.

As for top level BI officials led by Commissioners Jose Cabochan, Roy Almoro and Teodoro Delarmente, who reportedly signed Duc's release order, Gonzalez said they have been asked to explain their actions.

"All the commissioners have been asked to explain why they should not be charged with graft and mismanagement," Gonzalez said, speaking from Bacolod.

The DOJ secretary noted that the three commissioners submitted affidavits with "conflicting" statements.

Immigration chief Alipio Fernandez, however, would not be included in the investigation, Gonzalez said, adding that Fernandez was not around when the order for Duc's release was signed.

A DOJ panel headed by Undersecretary Ernesto Pineda which investigated the illegal deportation of aliens recommended the suspension of about five to 10 middle-level officials of the Bureau of Immigration for "mismanagement."

Contrary to Gonzalez's statement about Fernandez, however, undersecretary Felix Exconde said the BI chief did sign Duc's release order without verifying if the necessary clearances from the police, National Bureau of Investigation and the courts were in order to ensure that there are no pending cases against the foreigner to be deported.

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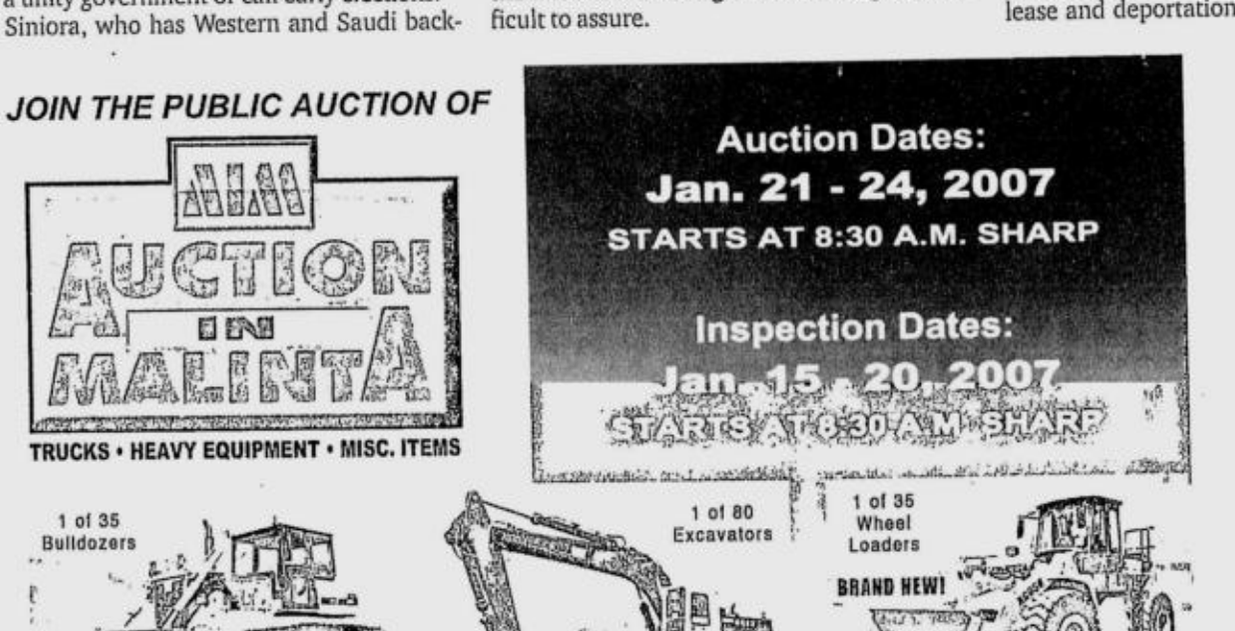

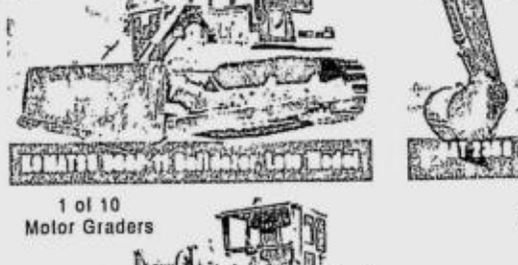

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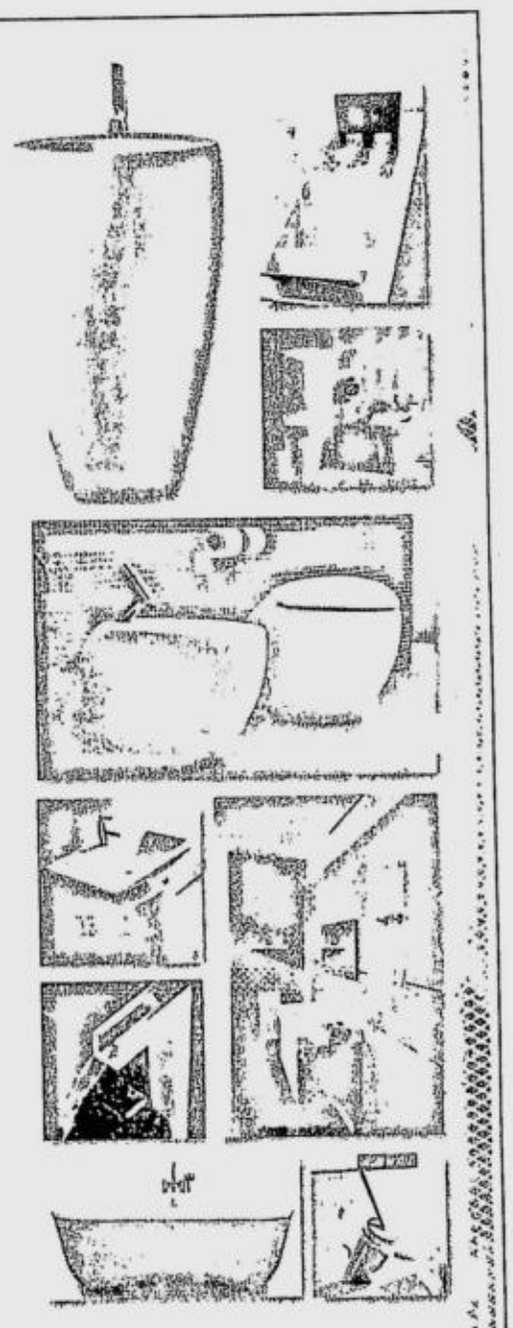

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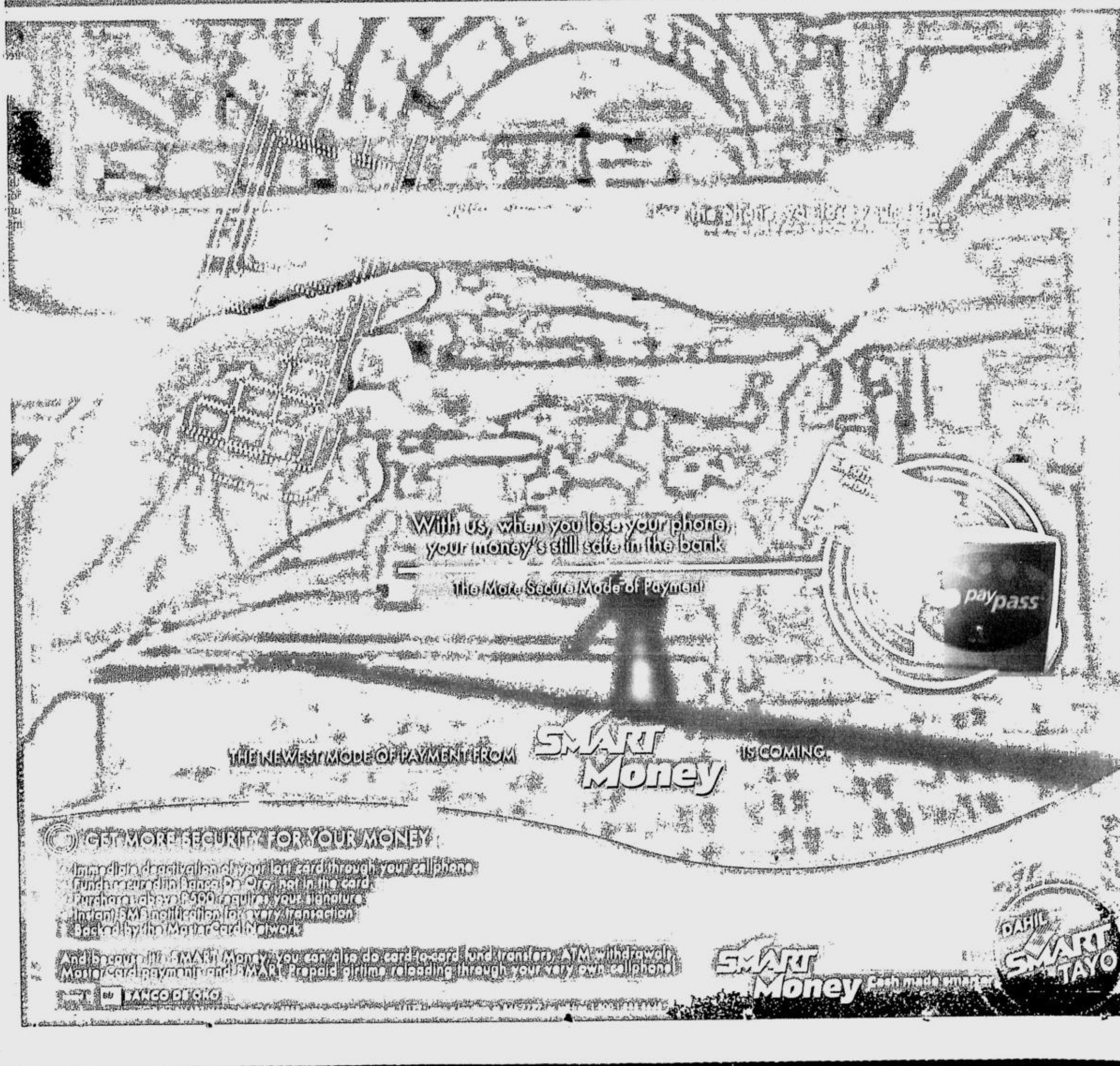

2 RP hospitals eyeing stem cell treatment

By Christian V. Esguerra

A PROMISING BUT HIGHLY controversial and fiercely debated medical treatment may soon be available to Filipinos and foreigners suffering from kidney problems.

Experts in at least two local hospitals are exploring the possibilities offered by stem cell treatment that might allow for the repair of damaged kidneys using the patient's own cells, according to Health Undersecretary Jade del Mundo.

Del Mundo, point man for the Philippine Medical Tourism Program, said research was currently going on in the government-run National Kidney and Transplant Institute and the privately owned Medical City.

Expected to follow suit is St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City, he said.

"We're looking at the possibility of making the treatment available within the next five years," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The success of the stem cell treatment would effectively address the chronic problem of the rise in the number of Filipino kidney patients which is growing by from 8,000 to 9,000 yearly. Of these, only 300 to 400 undergo kidney transplants.

The promising treatment, which suggests the regeneration of a kidney using a patient's own stem cells, would naturally cut down on the need and number of transplantations, Del Mundo said.

Last year, research using a mouse at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston indicated that stem cells harvested from bone marrow were "effective in reversing the damage" caused by Alport syndrome, a hereditary kidney disease that usually manifests itself during childhood.

The result was reported online by Ivanhoe.com, quoting from proceedings at the National Academy of Sciences dated April 24, 2006.

"Our results offer an opportunity for patients with Alport syndrome—treatment of their inherited renal failure that is an alternative to lifelong dependence on hemodialysis or the prospect of repeated kidney transplants starting in young adolescence," reported the medical e-mail service, quoting from the proceedings.

In July 2001, the BBC News website reported a similar discovery by scientists at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Barts Hospital, London Hospital and the Imperial College School of Medicine in the United Kingdom.

The study showed that stem cells from bone marrow were capable of developing into kidney cells.

"This discovery is very exciting and means we have new ways to treat kidney damage caused by cancer or other diseases," the BBC quoted professor Nick Wright, head of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's Histopathology Unit.

"Doctors could use stem cells from the patient's own bone marrow to replenish kidney cells lost by injury. This would be of huge benefit as the kidney is very poor at repairing itself," Wright had said.

In the West, though, breakthroughs in stem cell research have alarmed the Catholic Church.

Particularly unacceptable to the Vatican is the creation of human embryos from which stem cells could be harvested. Its contention is that the process is tantamount to destroying human life.

Del Mundo acknowledged that the ongoing research on stem cell treatment in the Philippines might infuriate the Catholic Church.

"In the West, the debate is very heated because of some countries' capability for human cloning," he said.

"In our case, there will definitely be no cloning. We will be very strict about that," he added.

Related to the research on stem cell treatment will be the preservation of blood from the umbilical cord of babies at the soon-to-be-built Women's Medical Center in Quezon City, according to Del Mundo.

The procedure is intended to ensure that doctors would have an easier time of treating possible congenital diseases that might pop up as the baby grows up, he explained.

"The preservation [of the blood] will provide them with a source of stem cells for the regeneration of a particular organ," he said.

IN THE KNOW

What are stem cells?

Stem cells have important characteristics that distinguish them from other cell types.

They are unspecialized cells that can develop into other specialized cell types in the body, like heart muscle cells, blood cells or nerve cells. Unlike these specialized cells, stem cells can replicate themselves many times over through cell division.

Under certain physiologic and experimental conditions, stem cells can be induced to transform into cells with special functions (i.e. beating cells of heart muscle, insulin-producing cells of the pancreas). As a sort of repair system of the body, stem cells can theoretically reproduce without limit as long as the person or animal is alive. Upon division, a new stem cell can either remain a stem cell or become a specialized one.

There are two kinds of stem cells: embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells. Embryonic stem cells are derived from embryos developed from eggs that have been fertilized in an in vitro fertilization clinic, and not from those fertilized within a woman's body.

On the other hand, adult stem cells can be found in organs and tissues, including the brain, bone marrow, blood vessels, skeletal muscles, skin and liver. In some instances, adult stem cells can generate replacements for cells that are lost through normal wear and tear, injury or disease.

The primary difference between the two: While embryonic stem cells can become all cell types of the body, adult stem cells are limited to becoming cell types of their tissue of origin.

For these unique properties, scientists are currently interested in the study of how stem cells may become the basis for treating diseases such as Parkinson's disease, diabetes, heart disease, traumatic spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy and vision and hearing loss, as well as for understanding birth defects in the future.

Source: Stem Cell Information: National Institutes of Health resource for stem cell research (http://stemcells.nih.gov/info)

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

JOSELITO DAZA, the Filipino who cracked a bomb joke while about to board a plane and landed into serious trouble in Hong Kong, arrives at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport midnight Thursday. INQUIRER PHOTO / JESS YUSON

'Bomb joker' back

A FILIPINO MAN AND A woman were deported back to Manila after being held by Hong Kong airport security after the man made a bomb joke inside a plane.

Joselito Daza, 20, arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at around 11:55 p.m. Thursday on board a Cebu Pacific flight. His cousin Sarah had arrived earlier at noon.

Upon his arrival from Hong Kong, Daza tried to elude news photographers and reporters with the help of airport security personnel, prompting some media men to complain that he was being accorded VIP status.

Daza was brought to the immigration section by airport security personnel and then whisked off to the intelligence investigating division of the airport police before being allowed to leave.

On Jan. 10, while in Hong Kong waiting for his flight to Manila, Daza told a stewardess he had a bomb inside his bag.

The stewardess reported the man's remarks and he was taken into custody by airport security.

GMA-7 News reported that Daza was detained at the police station for six hours and got out only when an aunt, who worked in Hong Kong, paid his bail of 5,000 HK dollars (P31,000).

In his arrival statement on Thursday, Daza said the police returned the 5,000 HK dollars.

Jerome Aning

Attention: All SSS Members

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		ER	EE	Total	ER	ER	EE	Total	
1,000 - 1,249.99	1,000	70.70	33.30	104	10	80.70	33.30	114	104
1,250 - 1,749.99	1,500	106.00	50.00	156	10	116.00	50.00	166	156
1,750 - 2,249.99	2,000	141.30	66.70	208	10	151.30	66.70	218	208
2,250 - 2,749.99	2,500	176.70	83.30	260	10	186.70	83.30	270	260
2,750 - 3,249.99	3,000	212.00	100.00	312	10	222 00	100.00	322	312
3,250 - 3,749.99	3,500	247.30	116.70	364	10	257.30	116.70	374	364
3,750 - 4,249.99	4,000	282.70	133.30	416	10	292 70	133.30	426	416
4,250 - 4,749.99	4,500	318.00	150.00	468	10	328.00	150.00	478	468
4,750 - 5,249.99	5,000	353 30	166.70	520	10	363.30	166.70	530	520
5,250 - 5,749.99	5,500	388.70	183.30	572	10	398.70	183.30	582	572
5,750 - 6,249.99	6,000	424 00	200.00	624	10	434.00	200.00	634	624
6,250 - 6,749.99	6,500	459.30	216.70	676	10	469.30	216.70	686	676
6,750 - 7,249.99	7,000	494.70	233.30	728	10	504.70	233.30	738	728
7,250 - 7,749.99	7,500	530.00	250.00	780	10	540.00	250.00	790	780
7,750 - 8,249.99	8,000	565.30	266.70	832	10	575.30	266.70	842	832
8,250 - 8,749.99	8,500	600.70	283.30	884	10	610.70	283.30	894	884
8,750 - 9,249.99	9,000	636.00	300.00	936	10	646 00	300.00	946	936
9,250 - 9,749.99	9,500	671.30	316.70	988	10	681.30	316.70	998	988
9,750 - 10,249.99	10,000	706.70	333.30	1,040	10	716.70	333.30	1,050	1,040
10,250 - 10,749.99	10,500	742.00	350.00	1,092	10	752.00	350.00	1,102	1,092
10,750 - 11,249.99	11,000	777.30	366.70	1,144	10	787.30	366.70	1,154	1,144
11,250 - 11,749.99	11,500	812.70	383.30	1,196	10	822 70	383.30	1,206	1,196
11,750 - 12,249.99	12,000	848.00	400.00	1,248	10	858.00	400.00	1,258	1,248
12,250 - 12,749.99	12,500	883 30	416.70	1,300	10	893.30	416.70	1,310	1,300
12,750 - 13,249.99	13,000	918.70	433.30	1,352	10	928.70	433.30	1,362	1,352
13,250 - 13,749.99	13,500	954 00	450.00	1,404	10	964.00	450.00	1,414	1,404
13,750 - 14,249.99	14,000	989.30	466.70	1,456	10	999.30	466.70	1,466	1,456
14,250 - 14,749.99	14,500	1,024 70	483.30	1,508	10	1,034.70	483.30	1,518	1,508
14,750 - over	15,000	1,060.00	500 00	1,560	30	1,090 00	500.00	1,590	1,560

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Oil firms slash gas prices by 50c a liter

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL OIL COMPANIES yesterday slashed the pump prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter to reflect lower international oil prices in January.

First to reduce prices was Eastern Petroleum Corp. at noon, followed by Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc., Seaoil Philippines Inc., and Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. at 2 p.m.

Flying V adjusted prices of the same products at 6 p.m., while Total (Philippines) Corp. followed suit at 8 p.m.

The oil firms cited the softening of international oil prices as the reason for the oil price reduction, the first for this year.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude significantly dropped to an average of $53.44 a barrel this month from $58.68 a barrel in December last year.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (Mops) benchmark for refined petroleum products also slipped to an average of just $63.37 a barrel in the first 11 days of January, from last month's $68.16 a barrel.

Mops-based diesel fell to a $69.22-a-barrel average in the Jan. 1-11 period, after shooting up to $72.20 a barrel last month.

Yesterday's price reduction places premium unleaded gasoline prices at between P35.53 and P38.06 a liter, diesel at between P30.27 and P34.30 a liter, and kerosene at between P33.69 and P38.50 a liter.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, January 13, 2007
1st Week in Ordinary Time
Hilary

1st Reading: Heb 4:12-16
Gospel: Mark 2:13-17

When Jesus went out again beside the lake, a crowd came to him and he taught them. As he walked along, he saw a tax collector sitting in his office. This was Levi, the son of Alpheus. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And Levi got up and followed him.

And it so happened that while Jesus was eating in Levi's house, tax collectors and sinners were sitting with him and his disciples for there were indeed many of them. But there were also teachers of the Law of the Pharisees' party, among those who followed Jesus, and when they saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why! He eats with tax collectors and sinners!"

Jesus heard them and answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

Commentary

Ah, the double-edged sword that penetrates and strips, and judges thoughts and hearts. It pierces going in and rips coming out, laying all bare and exposing us to the eye of God. God is mercy and we are exhorted to come forth and take what is offered to us. This is justice and mercy, the two sides of the face/hand of God.

Jesus approaches Matthew/Levi the tax collector and summons him, "Follow me"—just as he comes to each of us. And he follows Jesus, inviting him to his house to meet his friends. But there are those who cannot rejoice in conversion and the gift of life and they complain. Jesus comes for the sick, and the sinner—for us. But are we like Matthew, or those who resist and separate ourselves from 'them' because we think we are healthy and not in need of conversion?

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TO OWN

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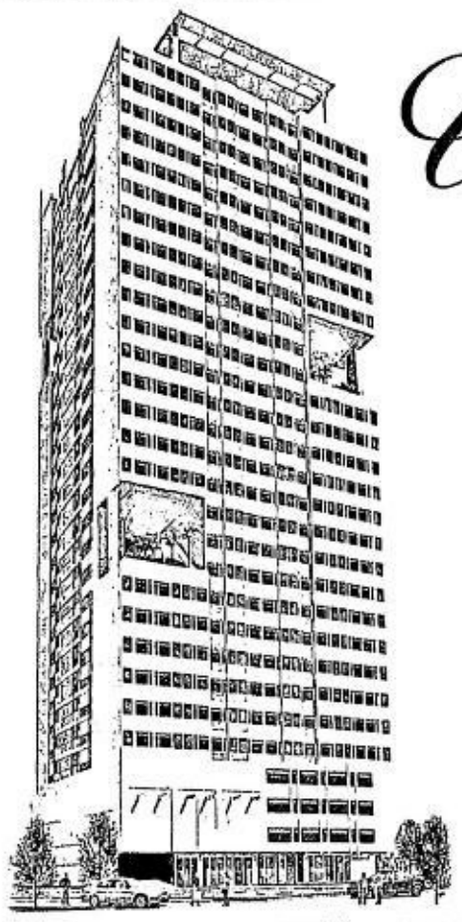

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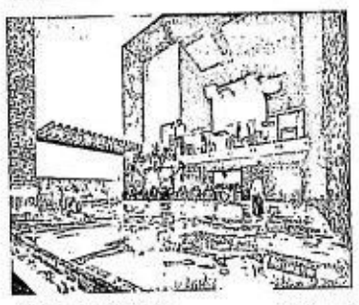

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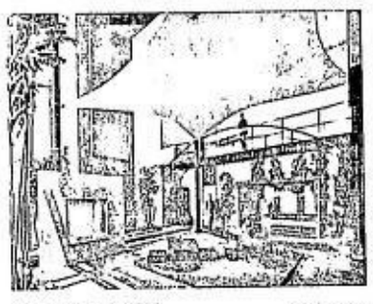
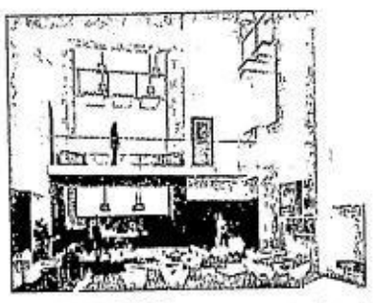


MIND ZONE (12th floor)

zen garden, foot massage path, picnic area, meditation garden/yoga zone, mini pond, tent pavillion, water feature.



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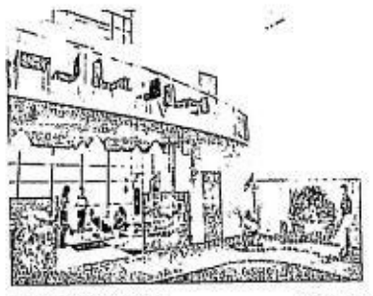

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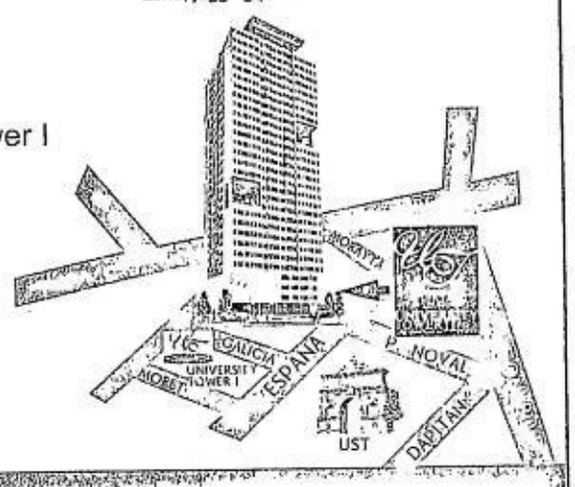

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FVR, Ermita on Estrada release: Let court decide

From page A1

tion allies, Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco and Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier, issued a statement describing Defensor's proposal as tantamount to executive intervention.

Cuenco, chair of the House committee on foreign affairs, said Defensor's remarks could be taken as an "affront" to the Sandiganbayan Special Division.

Told that Defensor had claimed that the President was "all for giving Estrada temporary liberty," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita himself said: "I can hardly believe that. He [Defensor] knows that, in the first place, the case is still in court.

Doubts GMA approval

"It's not for anybody to say what can be done with the case of President Estrada. Let the case be finished by the court."

Ermita also doubts that President Arroyo approves of the Defensor proposal.

In fact, Ermita knows of no Palace action leading to the temporary liberty of the ousted former President, who is under house arrest at his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, on plunder charges.

"No, none at all," Ermita yesterday told reporters in a phone patch interview when asked if there was any official move to pursue Defensor's proposal that Estrada be freed on recognizance, or under the guarantee of religious leaders.

He said he was surprised upon reading news reports on the matter.

"I don't know where Secretary Defensor is coming from," he said.

Defensor, who is running for senator in the May midterm elections, has long pushed the issue of Estrada's temporary release. But he said on Thursday that the move would be solely the "judgment call" of the Sandiganbayan Special Division, which tried Estrada's case.

Early this week, however, he said he would make the ousted president's release on recognizance one of the highlights of his campaign.

Cielo's offer

Apparently encouraged by Defensor's remarks, Cielo Macapagal-Salgado, the President's estranged elder sister, yesterday reiterated her offer of custody of Estrada in the event that he was released on recognizance.

"My offer stands in the spirit of reconciliation and for Estrada's liberty," Salgado, a former vice governor of Pampanga, said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Salgado first made the offer during the birthday celebration of Estrada two years ago, when talk about the latter's being granted temporary liberty was first floated.

Defensor's proposal had earlier been shot down by the President's legal adviser, Sergio Apostol, who said recognizance was not applicable to Estrada's case because plunder was not a bailable crime.

Pressure on court

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, another key Palace ally who triggered the impeachment case against Estrada that led to his ouster, warned that freeing the former President would virtually mean his absolution and an admission that Ms Arroyo's takeover in 2001 was a mistake.

"Secretary Defensor's statements, the latest of which says President Arroyo supports Erap's (Estrada's) release, may be taken as pressure on the court or even meddling in the judicial process," Cuenco said.

Cuenco said the administration had always stressed that the government respected the independence of the courts and that no one was above the law.

"Let's prove it here by allowing the court to take full jurisdiction of Erap and his case," the lawmaker said, adding that Malacañang should just wait for the antigraft court's decision.

Court's jurisdiction

Echoing Apostol, Javier pointed out that release on recognizance was not applicable to the former President.

"Estrada's case is a test case for the country and should not be subject to political compromise. Let justice take its course. Let's respect the independence of the court, which is set to rule on the case," he said.

Javier also said that while "national reconciliation" was a key point in Ms Arroyo's agenda, this did not mean that the government should enter into political compromise with members of the opposition facing cases in court.

"Reconciliation should be based on justice. We are always open to reconciliation with Erap, but this does not mean disregarding his plunder case because the case is a matter that falls under the court's jurisdiction," Javier said. *Reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Fe Zamora and Michael Lim Ubac*

LEVISTE: Too sick to talk about what happened.

Loren's ex . . .

From page A1

it's ex-Gov. Tony Leviste," said Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Around the same time De las Alas's body was brought out of Leviste's Makati office on a stretcher at 3:30 p.m. yesterday, the former governor surrendered to Binay and the local police at the Makati Medical Center.

"We came here because when he called me, he said he wanted to surrender. So for all intents and purposes, the legal process would be, because he has already surrendered, he is under arrest. The police just can't proceed with the investigation at this time because of his condition," Binay told reporters outside the hospital's emergency room.

"He said it was self-defense but you know, that's all we have right now. What is important is, as far as we are concerned, the case is closed in the sense that the one behind the killing had already surrendered to the police," the mayor added.

Loren's statement

Legarda, Binay's party mate in the political coalition United Opposition, said when reached for comment: "Whatever happened is very tragic but I can't speculate now as to what really happened. No matter what, regardless of the circumstances, justice must be served and no one is above the law."

Legarda, who is seeking a return to the legislature in the upcoming elections, pointed out that she and the confessed shooter had been "estranged for several years and I publicly announced that several months ago—we're leading separate lives."

Legarda had told the INQUIRER last December that she has been estranged from her husband the past four years. They have two sons.

De las Alas, a Sampaloc, Manila resident, was found dead between 12 noon and 1 p.m. yesterday inside Leviste's office on the ninth floor of the LPL Towers on Legaspi Street, within Makati's prime business block of Legaspi Village.

Binay said he was a longtime associate of Leviste, and that the two went back to the latter's days at the Batangas Provincial Capitol.

Senior Insp. Marlon Almoguerra, chief of the Makati police homicide section, said De las Alas sustained a gunshot to the top of his head. A handgun, cal. 9mm, was also found in his right hand, as if it had just been pulled out of a holster.

Self-defense

While Leviste had already owned up to the shooting, police could not get him to talk about how it happened because of his condition.

"We can't speak to him yet. So far, all he said was that there was a shooting and that he was involved, but as to the details of the incident, we can't ask him about it yet. He said he will cooperate, that it was self-defense but as far as details, 'we don't have them yet," said Supt. Gilbert Cruz, Makati police chief.

Binay said Leviste, who has a known heart condition, was lying on a hospital bed at the Makati Medical Center but he refused to divulge the room number. According to Binay, Leviste was breathing through an oxygen tube as doctors tried to stabilize his condition.

Binay said Leviste did not sustain any injury during the incident. It was "upon doctors' orders," Binay said, that the businessman was confined at the hospital.

"He is conscious but upon his doctor's advice, visitors are not allowed to speak to him for long periods. His blood pressure shot up and you must also consider his history. He already had a heart problem," said Binay.

Police deferred to the medical advice, with Cruz saying it would be hard for any investigation to proceed if Leviste's condition worsened.

'Critical time'

"We have to make sure that his heart condition will not worsen because this is a critical time in the investigation," said the police chief in a press briefing.

Since he has confessed to a crime, Leviste would also be under a 24-hour police watch, Cruz said. As soon as he turned himself in, four police officers had been deployed to guard Leviste and make sure he stayed inside his room, he added.

Investigation would proceed as soon as Leviste was well enough to speak to the police, Cruz said, adding that the former governor might be charged with homicide.

"Doctor's advice will tell us when we could detain him at the police station. We are right now trying to look for possible motives through the witnesses we got," he said.

Binay also guaranteed that Leviste would participate in the investigation.

"It is his prerogative, whatever his lawyer would decide, whether to give a statement or not. But as far as detention, it all depends on his condition. And besides, he is already guarded and there is no more chance of him escaping. First, he has already surrendered. Do you think he will still escape?" Binay said.

Nani doubts Ombudsman's competence

From page A1

ignore the assertions under oath of Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño and chose to rely on the uncorroborated statements of Jimenez.

According to Perez, Zuño had told the Ombudsman investigators that there was neither threat nor intimidation when Perez had discussed with Jimenez information that could be used in prosecuting Estrada.

"Yet, unexplainably and despite the fact that the assertions under oath of the Chief State Prosecutor were never made the subject of rebuttal by Mario B. Crespo a.k.a. Mark Jimenez, the Ombudsman chose to rely on the uncorroborated statement of the latter," Perez said in his 50-page motion.

Perez said that with Zuño's statement under oath and in light of the fact that Escaler claimed to be the owner of the funds in question and that the funds had already reverted to Escaler, "what elements of robbery or extortion had been presented?"

"None, yet the Ombudsman said that robbery was committed," Perez said.

He said there was also no case of graft against him as he did not ask Jimenez for any money following the latter's offer to testify against Estrada.

'No extortion'

"There was, therefore, no extortion of money from the complainant. There was even no reason to extort money from him since the complainant was offering himself to testify for the government," Perez said.

"Why then should he be asked to pay for something that he wanted to do?" he added.

Exchange of accusations and counter-accusations in the media let loose by the Ombudsman resolution recommending the filing of charges against Perez intensified yesterday.

Estrada, who with his former police chief, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, claimed that the $2 million that Perez allegedly tried to extort from Jimenez was part of a $14-million payoff for the approval of a power contract for an Argentine firm, yesterday denied that he had been bribed to approve the contract.

Jimenez, who has insisted that his $2-million extortion case against Perez was not connected to the $450-million contract won by the Argentine-based Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima (Impsa), said it was Estrada himself who endorsed the Impsa contract to his justice secretary until it was overtaken by the second people power revolution that ousted Estrada.

Offered to Erap

"If I was bribed, they would have had no lucrative contract to earn from," Estrada said, implying that the alleged $14-million bribe from Impsa went to the Arroyo administration.

"I would have already approved the deal before they had the chance to do so," he added.

He said the $14 million was first offered to him in exchange for his administration's signing the deal.

Estrada admitted that he went to Mendoza in Argentina to meet with Impsa executives but not to receive a multimillion-dollar bribe.

He said he just told the Impsa executives that he would honor the commitment made by his predecessor, former President Fidel Ramos, to the power firm.

"But when I learned that the contract entailed a sovereign guarantee, I no longer wanted it approved," Estrada said.

A sovereign guarantee requires the national government to assume the liabilities of a private Philippine company should it be unable to pay its debts to a contractor.

He said it was his successor, President Macapagal-Arroyo, who "gave her blessings to Nani Perez to sign the legal opinion paving the way for the signing of the contract."

Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, Estrada's wife, yesterday dared Jimenez to show proof that her husband approved the Impsa contract.

"He (Jimenez) should present in public any document showing that Erap signed the contract," she said in a phone interview.

Sovereign guarantee

Ejercito insisted that her husband neither signed the contract because of the abhorrent "sovereign guarantee" clause nor got a "single centavo" from it.

Go slow on inquiry

Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the blue ribbon committee, said the Senate should go slow on proposals to revive the inquiry into the Impsa deal.

"The case is with the Ombudsman. Whenever it's like that, Congress, the Senate or the House should go slow. We should give some respect for other departments of government," he said in a radio interview.

Arroyo also clarified reports saying that his committee did not act on Lacson's resolution seeking an investigation of the alleged Impsa payoff. He said this was never referred to his committee in the first place.

"The blue ribbon committee has no pending matter unacted upon as the primary committee," he said.

Senate resolution

Lacson said last Thursday he would revive a resolution seeking an inquiry into the alleged $14-million payoff to Arroyo administration officials in exchange for the approval of the Impsa contract.

Administration Representatives Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur and Edwin Uy of Isabela urged Lacson to "stop acting like a fishwife" and come out immediately with his evidence on the alleged involvement of the President and her husband in the extortion case.

Jimenez cleared GMA

Cagas and Uy pointed out that Jimenez himself had already cleared the President and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo of any link to the Impsa deal.

"Put up or shut up. These are unsubstantiated charges similar to previous unproven charges against the Arroyos of which Ping has always been wont to do," said Cagas.

Cagas said Lacson was "so fond of making blanket accusations of corruption against the Arroyos similar to his Jose Pidal and other exposés which turned out to be duds."

"The truth is Lacson has nothing to show, as usual, and that he is now dragging the First Gentleman into the issue to divert public attention that he cannot show proof of what he's saying," Uy said. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio*

Scholar: Koran not lost in Maranao . . .

From page A1

Koran into the Maranao language.

Basman said "Sulaiman was probably lost in his own translation" of the Maranao version of the Koran.

Sulaiman, a specialist in the classic Arab language of the Koran, said he came across the questionable translation from a copy given by a relative.

He said other copies were being distributed by Arab-looking men to Filipino pilgrims departing from the Jeddah International Airport during the annual hajj.

Sulaiman claimed the Maranao version had questionable lines, one of which even allegedly called Allah a "cow."

The verse in question supposedly read: "Do you know who God is? He says, He, indeed, is a cow."

Basman, who heads the Center for Moderate Muslims, said such a line was blasphemous—only if it was really included in the Maranao translation, which has been distributed by the Saudi Arabian government since 2003.

Basman's verses

Basman, who got a copy that year, said the line mentioned by Sulaiman was nowhere to be found in the Maranao version.

He said verses 67 to 69 actually read: "(67) And remember when Moses said to his people: Verily, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow. They said, Do you make fun of us? He said, I take Allah's refuge from being among the ignorant or the foolish.

"(68) They said, Call upon your Lord for us that He make plain to us what it is! He said, He (Allah) said, Verily it is a cow neither too old nor too young, but it is between the two conditions, so do what you are commanded.

"(69) They said, Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us its color. He said, He (Allah) said, It is a yellow cow, bright in its color, pleasing the beholder."

No complaints

According to Basman, not one Maranao cleric or scholar has questioned the translation since it came out in 2003.

He said the version was a product of more than 10 years of diligent work which involved his late father, Imam Nasruddin Basman, who used to head the Mindanao Islamic Center, the biggest mosque in the country.

"I don't know where Sulaiman got his translation but his complaint is definitely not in the actual Maranao translation. It appears that he's trying to create animosity between the Maranaos and the rest of the world," Basman said.

He was concerned about the issues raised by Sulaiman considering that the Maranaos "number more than a million and have the biggest number of clerics and scholars among Muslim ethnic groups in the Philippines."

He said the Maranao population was concentrated in the Lanao provinces, with communities in Davao, Zamboanga, Agusan, Cebu, Baguio and Metro Manila.

Maranaos isolated?

"None of them (clerics and scholars) has ever complained, but here you have Sulaiman—who's not even a Maranao—pointing out a so-called corruption in the translation," Basman said.

He said Sulaiman was also wrong in claiming that the Maranao translation cited Jews and Christians as "unbelievers."

In reality, the term referred only to the "Khafiru," which is the term for people who had "deviated from the right path," Basman said.

"Claims of a corrupt translation are very serious so they have to be corrected right away," he said. "I'm afraid the Maranaos might be isolated in the Muslim world.

S'pore woman charged with graft for giving visas to Pinays for a fee

SINGAPORE—A FORMER IMMIGRATION officer in Singapore has been charged with taking bribes in exchange for visitors' visas, most of which went to Filipinas, a report said Friday.

Siti Sarina Mohamed Kassim, 28, is charged with 24 counts of agreeing to accept a total of 2,150 Singapore dollars in bribes, The Straits Times reported.

Kassim was an Immigration and Checkpoints Authority officer based at Woodlands, just across from Johor Baru in Malaysia, when the alleged offenses occurred between June and December 2004, it said.

She allegedly received 50 dollars from two men for each 14-day visa which she endorsed. The men allegedly ran a syndicate allowing foreign women to briefly leave the country and then return to extend their stay with a new visa.

The Straits Times said the men knew Kassim's work schedule and booth number and arranged for the women, mostly Filipinos, to stop at her booth.

Many Filipinos enter Singapore on short-term visas and work as bar hostesses.

Contacted by AFP, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau confirmed the information in the local press report.

If convicted, Kassim faces a fine of up to 100,000 dollars or a maximum five years in jail, or both, the newspaper said. *AFP*

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S. Korea to meet with China, Japan on stalled Nokor nuke talks

CEBU CITY—PROGRESS NEEDS to be made quickly on breaking a deadlock in multilateral talks to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program, South Korea's Foreign Minister Song Min-soon said yesterday.

Song agreed in a meeting with his Chinese and Japanese counterparts on the sidelines of a summit here that the stalled talks need to be resumed soon and progress must be made.

"Talks need to be held at an early date, and we agreed to cooperate to ensure that they produce a productive result," he said.

The so-called six-party talks bring together the Koreas, Japan, China, the United States and Russia.

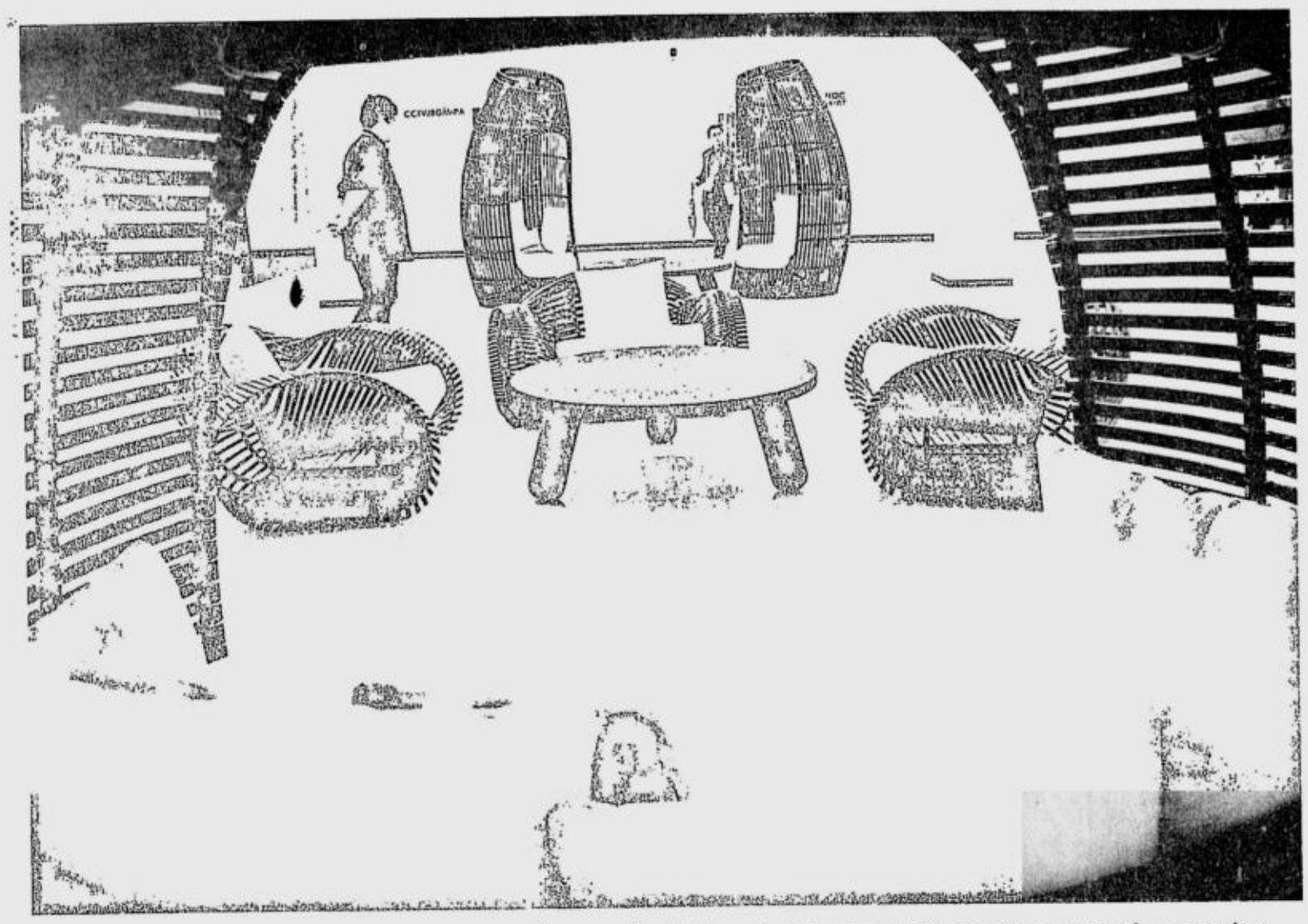
The financial dispute was the main stumbling block in last month's round of talks, which ended with no agreements and no date set for a new round. The North insisted Washington lift financial restrictions first before disarmament discussions begin in earnest.

The United States and North Korea have tentatively agreed to hold talks from Jan. 22 on the financial restrictions, according to South Korean officials.

Washington imposed restrictions on a Macau-based bank, which was holding North Korean accounts, due to Pyongyang's alleged involvement in counterfeiting and money laundering. That led to a freezing of the North's assets, worth US$24 million, at the bank.

Pyongyang says that the sanctions prove Washington's "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang, and that the North needs nuclear weapons for protection.

Washington has denied it intends to invade the country, and says the restrictions are a law enforcement matter unconnected to the nuclear issue. *AP*



SIGNATURE FURNITURE of Kenneth Cobonpue are stellar attractions in the main hall and most of the meeting rooms at the convention center and the suites of the heads of state at the Mactan Shangri-La. JUNJIE MENDOZA/CDN

Summit a showcase for Cebu furniture

From page A1

tive director of the Cebu Furniture Industry Foundation Inc., said Ambassador Marciano Paynor Jr., secretary general of the 12th Asean Summit NOC, asked them to help by supplying the furniture for the summit venues in Shangri-La's Mactan and the CICC.

Paynor had asked the Cebu furniture industry to furnish the meeting rooms in the CICC and in the new Shangri-La structure, and to bring in some choice pieces to the Shangri-La suites where the heads of state would be staying.

"We did not hesitate. We are rallying behind the government, specifically for Cebu," Salutan said.

New designs

CFIF asked the members to volunteer. Twenty-four furniture companies responded to the call, she said.

At first, the NOC asked the companies to loan furniture which they had on hand.

However, the companies decided to come up with new designs, about 75 percent of the total requirement, to meet the specifications given by the NOC, which included the seat height and raw materials to be used, Salutan said.

It was not an easy task. "It was just like preparing for Cebu X (Cebu International Furniture and Furnishings Exhibition)," Salutan said.

Cebu furniture companies also supplied the furniture at the Most Important Person lounge (MIP) at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport but these were paid for by the government. However, some CFIF members lent accessories for the lounge.

Malacañang sa Sugbo

Salutan said CFIF members had also donated the furniture, valued at P5 million to P6 million, in all the rooms at the Malacañang sa Sugbo, the President's official residence in Cebu.

The pieces of furniture were ready and had been delivered in early December in time for the original schedule of the summit on Dec. 11-14.

Salutan said the companies decided to help supply the furniture for the Asean summit "not for the benefit of the industry, but because of their love of country and Cebu ... Many of the Asean member-countries also have their own furniture industry. This is a milestone for Cebu. We are putting our best foot forward."

The furniture industry has been facing stiff challenges from its competitors within the Asean region.

Stiff competition

With the rising competition from Asean countries, CFIF organized training programs to help furniture companies cope with the challenges by improving productivity and enhancing design capability.

CFIF also joined international fairs, with the assistance of the Private Enterprise Accelerated Resource Linkages phase two (Pearl2) of the Canadian International Development Agency, which had provided subsidies for the small and medium enterprises.

While the Cebu furniture sector comprises 20 percent of the entire industry, it accounted for a huge share in the country's total exports.

According to CFIF, Cebu's total furniture exports amounted to $120 million (P5.87 billion), 41 percent of the country's total furniture exports of $294 million (P14.40 billion).

CFIF has about 170 members that employ 200,000 workers.

Brand Cobonpue

Cobonpue's family has always been in furniture for as long as he could remember.

His mother Betty started making furniture in 1972 and went into the export market in 1984.

In his teens, Cobonpue studied industrial design at the Pratt Institute in New York.

After finishing his course, he apprenticed in Florence, Italy and, from there, went to Germany for further studies where he got a scholarship and did some work there.

He went back to the Philippines in 1996 to manage the family company, Interior Craft of the Islands Inc. But he was not satisfied with just selling furniture.

Instead, Cobonpue wanted to develop his own brand.

At that time, he said the companies sourcing their furniture in Southeast Asia sell the products under their own brand, without acknowledging the country of origin.

"I wanted to change all that," Cobonpue said.

Hello, Hollywood

Three years later, he decided to sell only to clients who are willing to carry the company's furniture under his name.

"I lost some clients. Until now I still face difficulties," he said.

Cobonpue, 38, has been recognized here and abroad, winning awards such as the Japan Good Design Award (seven times), 2004 Design for Asia Award, Best Seating at the 2005 Las Vegas Hospitality and Design Show and Best Outdoor Chair from the Home Magazine at the 2004 High Point Furniture Show in North Carolina.

He uses natural materials but in a different way, taking inspiration from nature, coming up with unusual names for his collections such as Yin Yang, Dragnet, Suzy Wong, Luna and Kawayan, among others.

His client list includes names from Hollywood. He even did a set for Warner Brothers.

"Warner Brothers originally wanted to buy just a few pieces but when I sent the catalogue they asked me to outfit the whole lounge, which was not what they usually do. They usually mix pieces," Cobonpue said.

Filipino niche

While the Philippines has lost out the low-end furniture market to China, he said the high-end market remains an alternative market for the furniture makers.

But he urged other furniture exporters to come up with something unique to develop their own brands.

"Find a product that is special. You have to have your own style, your own niche," he added.

Only by doing this, he said, could furniture companies remain competitive.

Terrorists plot new strikes, specify target ...

From page A1

the bomb attacks, and that police had started gathering information on their movements.

Col. Vicente Porto, commander of the Army's 1002nd Infantry Brigade, said another platoon of soldiers had been assigned to General Santos to beef up security in the city.

Porto said soldiers and bomb-sniffing dogs would be deployed to busy public places including malls.

Supt. Rolando Dalangin, chief of Task Force Triple-B, the police panel assigned to look into the bombings, expressed certainty that the regional extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was involved in the attacks.

He said Roy Siddique and Basit Usman, supposed rebel commanders responsible for the three explosions, were known JI operatives.

But Chief Supt. German Doria, Central Mindanao police commander, said there was nothing conclusive as yet.

Police were also questioning a 25-year old Indonesian, Nicolas Keramis, another suspected JI member, Doria said.

Just a suspect

On Thursday in Manila, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon identified Usman as the mastermind of the bomb attacks and described him as a former member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Esperon also told reporters that Usman was now working with the extremist Abu Sayyaf and the JI.

But yesterday, the military through its public information chief, Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, told reporters that Usman was "just one of the possible suspects."

"We would just like to make a correction on that. He is one of the suspects. He has not yet been identified as the mastermind," Bacarro said.

According to Doria, "anyone can be a suspect at this stage because we are still in the process of reconstructing evidence retrieved from the blast sites."

"It is premature to say that the explosions had the same source and origin and that the ones responsible belong to one and the same group," he said.

Doria said the perpetrators had used varying types of explosives, making it difficult for police to conclude that a single group was responsible.

For example, he said, in the Kidapawan explosion, police had retrieved a lever at the blast site, indicating that a hand grenade was used, while the explosion that killed a garbage collector in Cotabato City was caused by an 81-millimeter mortar shell.

"If the suspects had used the same type of explosive, it would not be hard for us to interconnect the incidents and come out with a conclusion," Doria said.

3 possible motives

Asked if Usman was being tracked down by authorities, Bacarro said: "Definitely."

He said there were other probable motives for the bombings, which occurred just as the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit got underway in Cebu.

Rigged motorcycle

Bacarro has mentioned three possible motives for the bomb attacks—to divert the military from pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf and JI in Sulu; to sabotage ongoing peace talks between the government and the MILF; and to retaliate against local warring groups.

"Those are probabilities. But until we get the result of the technical investigation being conducted by the [Philippine National Police]... we [cannot] zero in [on one group]," he said, adding:

"He (Usman) is one of the suspects based on probabilities and historical data, but we are not discounting other probabilities."

Usman was charged in connection with the bombings of Tacurong and Cotabato as well as in the municipality of Makilala in North Cotabato.

Bacarro mentioned an incident about a month ago where soldiers intercepted a motorcycle rigged with explosives at a checkpoint in Tacurong.

The military believed then that the motorcycle would have been used to stage a bomb attack in the city.

"The motorcycle rigged with explosives was reported to have been made by orders of Basit (Usman)," Bacarro said.

Esperon said on Thursday that the military had identified the mastermind as "Usman Basit" based on the "signature" or the distinctive style of wiring used in the bombs.

But Bacarro said: "We are awaiting the result of the investigation being done by the [PNP] with the collaboration of the military. They have a database on bomb signatures of different groups ... But we're looking at probabilities and his (Usman's) group would be one of the probable suspects."

Check your facts

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said Usman had never been a member of the separatist group.

"The military and the police better check their facts before linking anybody with us," Kabalu said.

But he admitted that Usman's elder brother, who was abducted by yet unidentified persons in 2001, was an MILF member.

"The elder brother, Ustadz Mohiden Usman, was a member of the MILF's religious services. But he disappeared in 2001. This Basit never became an MILF member," Kabalu said.

In a report, Agence France-Presse quoted Kabalu as saying that the MILF was checking its members after allegations by the military that Usman could be behind the deadly bombings.

"We are investigating our ranks, but I am repeating, we did not have anything to do with the attacks," Kabalu said.

"We are engaged in talks with the government and we have agreed in the past to help authorities in stopping foreign terrorists," he said.

Kabalu also denied military claims that Usman was being protected by MILF factions in jungle areas in Mindanao.

Cover-up

In Davao City, the Moro human rights group Kawagib said it was hoping that the military would not again turn on innocent members of Moro communities "to cover up [its] inability to anticipate the bombings."

"Esperon's leadership in Basilan during the crackdown on the Abu Sayyaf in 2001 is tainted with a record of illegal arrests, detention and torture of Moro civilians just so his brigade could immediately present suspects to the media and President Arroyo," Kawagib spokesperson Sittie Sundang said.

Sundang cited as example the case of Davao bombings suspect Rahman Camili, a member of the Suara Bangsamoro party-list group in Madaum, Davao del Norte.

She said Camili was abducted by suspected government agents last Dec. 18, long after he was cleared of involvement in the Davao attacks.

Camili remains missing to this day; the military denies having him in custody.

For antiterror bill

Ariel Casilao, secretary general of the militant party-list group Bayan Muna in Southern Mindanao, said the bombings could have been orchestrated by the government to push for the passage of the antiterror bill pending in Congress.

"We have recorded more than 30 bombings in Mindanao in recent years, and the government has so far not been able to present or convict any clear suspect. But the government has been successful in tagging the Moro people as behind all these attacks," Casilao said. *With reports from Aquiles Zonio, Charlie*

Final kinks ironed out in draft on migrant workers

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—A DRAFT CONvention to protect Southeast Asia's vast army of migrant workers in the region hurdled final kinks yesterday, assigning "obligations" on Asean member states to pay and house workers properly and assure them ample representation under the local justice system.

A once-contentious provision on how the workers' families should be covered by agreement being hammered out by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations had also been ironed out, according to Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos, who represented the government.

The so-called "receiving" or employing states are bound by the accord to ensure workers' "access to information, training and education, justice and social welfare services," Conejos explained at the sidelines of the 12th Asean Summit here.

Extended family

The "sending" states are expected to supply workers who are not only trained for their intended job but who will pose no legal problems to the receiving country. Tougher measures against human trafficking and illegal recruitment are expected from these states.

According to a final draft shown to the INQUIRER, the agreement of the "fundamental rights and dignity" of migrant workers is to be extended to their family members "residing with them" in the country of employment.

Conejos explained that this provision contemplates workers who, after finding a job abroad, got married and raised a family there, not those who already had a family in the native country prior to employment overseas.

Not yet legally binding

Some member countries had earlier expressed reservations over this provision lest they be misconstrued as encouraging migrant workers to bring family members along with them, a conflict with their labor policies.

Conejos said that of all the commitments forged in this 10-nation summit, the consensus reached on migrant labor probably "best embodies" the gathering's theme of "One Caring and Sharing Community."

But since the agreement is still in the form of a "declaration," it may not yet be as legally binding as a convention and its implementation by the individual member states will be "monitored" by the Asean Secretariat, the official conceded.

A declaration at this point, though, could already wield enough "moral-suasion" among Asean states in looking after the interest of their respective over-

RP's 'moment of glory'

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other in the spirit of friendship and common purpose," she said.

Ms Arroyo said she wanted the summit to be "another opportunity for the world to witness the best of a sharing and caring community carving out a united response in addressing problems of poverty, terrorism, environmental degradation, trade and energy—marking a vibrant market and a new phase of trade and development across borders."

Leaders of the 10-nation bloc approved the proposal by its eminent persons group (EPG) to begin writing a charter for an "Asean Economic Community" with a free flow of goods, services, investment and capital by 2015, according to a draft statement released to reporters.

The leaders also agreed to take joint action against terrorism and cross-border crimes, said the statement to be issued after the summit concludes on Sunday.

The Asean members have long voiced support for a joint charter, but the process of writing one remains in its initial stages. Officials here say they see the declaration as a starting point for the charter, and have refused to speculate on when it might actually be completed.

NO ENTRY for militants, and riot policemen are positioned to make sure they don't. Authorities declared that 300 meters away from the summit sites, the Cebu International Convention Center and the Mactan Shangri-La, no rally zones. REM ZAMORA

Sticking point

One sticking point in the charter has been the proposal of a clause to allow member states to sanction others who do not comply with its guidelines. This is seen as a means to influence the military junta ruling Burma (Myanmar), which has long lagged behind the rest of the region in its dismal human rights record.

Before the Asean summit this weekend, Asean foreign ministers expressed serious concern over Burma's slow progress toward democracy and urged the junta to release all political prisoners.

EPG members refused to specify what grounds would be covered by punitive action, but the fundamental principles and objectives cited in the EPG's executive summary called for the "promotion of peace and stability through the active strengthening of democratic values, good governance, rejection of unconstitutional and undemocratic changes of government, the rule of law including humanitarian law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Task force to do final draft

Former President Fidel V. Ramos, a vocal member of the EPG, said the final draft of the proposed charter would be done by a high-level task force. It would then be submitted to the leaders for final decision not later than the Asean meeting in Singapore in November this year.

"This is not about noninterference or interference or something in between, we're talking about Asean two generations from now," said Ramos.

In an interview with reporters, former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam, EPG chair, said "that today the heads of government have endorsed our recommendations."

Hitam said: "The compliance to decision making that has been arrived at by Asean on any particular issue or subject will have to be observed. If not we give the power and space for the leaders of Asean to consider all possibilities in terms of enforcement which does not preclude expulsion in very, very, very serious cases of non-compliance."

Hitam said that it was not for the EPG to decide what transgressions would merit expulsion.

North Korea talks

The other main points of the final document were the expansion of free and fair trade; a switch from fossil fuels to biofuels to enhance energy security; and the reduction of poverty to narrow the development gap.

On international issues, the Philippines offered to host the next round of the so-called "Six-Party Talks"—the Koreas, Japan, China, the United States and Russia—on the denuclearization of North Korea. No place or date for the talks has been decided.

The Asean leaders were also to call for the successful conclusion of the Doha round of the World Trade Organization talks, saying that success of the round "is crucial to the further strengthening of the multilateral trading system."

The draft statement added that Asean welcomes Vietnam's joining the WTO, and supports the acceptance of Laos into the body as well.

The summit brings together the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their dialogue partners—Australia, China, Japan, India, South Korea and New Zealand.

Cebu tightens security as Asean summit starts

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—SECURITY AS NEVER before felt in this resort island province reached fever pitch yesterday, with all 10 leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations having arrived for a three-day summit formally starting today.

Riot police dispersed some 300 activists and arrested four of them yesterday outside the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC). The four were charged with civil disobedience and later released on bail, Mandaue City police chief Alexander Abadines said.

The demonstrators protested trade liberalization and alleged political killings and set off firecrackers near a gasoline station. Abadines said the demonstration was illegal. "No permits for the demonstrations have been issued for the duration of the summit," he said.

At least two Filipino photographers told the INQUIRER that policemen manning the "ceremonial route" had stopped them from taking shots and demanded that they get "permits" first—something unheard of among the media people here until yesterday.

Traffic to and from Shangri-La Mactan, the leaders' summit residence and main meeting venue, was alternately closed for hours to let only VIP convoys pass. Reporters who went there for a 9 a.m. briefing, for example, only got clearance to leave at around 2 p.m.

Movements at CICC restricted

At the CICC, movement had also been restricted. Save for the official delegations, all the other occupants, including journalists, were barred from using the main entrance and diverted to a side door, past the kitchen and mess hall.

But the clearest indicator, perhaps, of how Cebu's red carpet for Asean delegates resulted in red-faced annoyance for someone else were the incidents involving veteran lensmen Romy Gacad and Vic Kintanar.

Gacad of Agence France Press said a radio-toting traffic cop flagged his marked press vehicle and five more officers followed to question him by the roadside at around noon Thursday at the Pusok Intersection in neighboring Lapu-Lapu City.

A certain officer "Gadingan," the apparent leader of the team, demanded that Gacad proceed to the Lapu-Lapu police headquarters and secure a permit to take pictures of certain areas in the city.

Shot of 'welcome' billboard

It shortly became clear to Gacad that he was being held for a picture he took some 5 kilometers back: The shot was that of workmen putting floral adornments on a "Welcome" billboard that had portraits of the Asean leaders, near the Mactan International Airport.

He made a quick call to report his predicament to AFP's bureau chief who was also in Cebu for the summit. Minutes later Cagad got a call from a Malacañang press undersecretary, who then spoke with the apprehending officer.

Gadingan then "apologized" and let Gacad go. The whole episode lasted for 20 minutes.

'Ridiculous'

The photographer, who had been covering for AFP in the last 21 years and had seen action in war-torn Iraq, found the incident "ridiculous," noting that it was the first time he had been stopped by police from doing his job in the country.

He said he would understand such a restriction if he were in a war zone and taking photos of military installations. He recalled having covered summits in other countries and an Apec summit held in Manila—and encountering no such problems.

Accosted for 'lack of permit'

Kintanar, a stringer for Reuters, said he had been accosted by police for the same "lack of permit" twice, last Tuesday and Thursday.

In both instances, he was prevented from clicking away at the Marcelo Fernan Bridge, a part of the VIP route leading to the airport.

In the first incident on Jan. 9 shortly before noon, he was taking photos of Philippine Navy patrollers in the Mactan Channel. Like Gacad, a police officer asked that he first go get a permit at the precinct in Lapu-Lapu.

On Jan. 11, at around 9 a.m., he was set to take pictures, this time from the banks beneath the bridge—and was again prevented by a police officer, who this time "shouted" at him and took his name and that of his media organization. *With reports from Irene R. Sino Cruz and Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas, AP*

We're being truthful, Aussie exec says of travel warnings

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—A RANKING AUSTRALIAN official said yesterday that his government was just being "truthful to our citizens" in issuing travel warnings about the Philippines, including the latest timed with the 12th Asean Summit being held here.

Trade Minister Warren Truss acknowledged that Canberra's negative advisories could be "damaging" to the tourism sector of any subject country, "but we do have an obligation to report honestly" about "acts of violence in other parts of the world."

Australia, a dialogue partner of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has joined Canada and United Kingdom in retaining earlier calls on their respective citizens to avoid travel to Cebu because of an alleged terrorist plot targeting the summit.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has nevertheless confirmed attendance, scheduled to arrive at around 2 p.m. this Sunday.

Truss met reporters at the sidelines of the ministerial meetings preparatory to the leaders' summit.

"We need to stamp out terrorism and then these sorts of warnings won't be necessary," he said, citing recent security assistance and partnerships that Australia has extended to the Philippines.

High in the summit agenda is a draft Convention on Counterterrorism which, according to Filipino diplomats, elevates to a "legally binding" arrangement a past Asean declaration and other cooperation agreements dealing with regional security threats.

Since cooperation involves information-sharing, the official said, "a member can now demand for the basis of a travel advisory issued by another. Exchange of information is no longer just a right but an obligation."

For example, he said, "a country can say to another: 'I have information that there's connivance between my citizen and yours. But I don't know much about your citizen, so give me that information."

It's a picnic, a wedding, fireworks ...

From page A1

And if they're up to it, they are also welcome to a "dream" wedding reception today at the hotel where they are staying.

Reception at the beach fronting Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa in Lapu-Lapu City had been arranged long before the original Asean summit was reset and the hotel had to honor its commitment to the couple.

So the summit organizers decided to incorporate the wedding reception as an optional program that Asean leaders might want to attend. It is only a few hundred yards from the meeting venues.

While presidents and prime ministers are grappling with poverty, terrorism and the state of East Asia's economies, their wives (and husbands) will be getting the full-on cultural experience in Cebu.

Leading the charge will be President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel.

"What we have learned from the First Gentleman is that the program for the spouses should be just as important as that of the heads of state," said Margot Osmeña, the wife of the mayor of Cebu.

"What we want to do is show something of our culture, the people and life in Cebu. Because at the end of the day, we don't have that many museums," she told Agence France Presse.

Battle of Mactan to be recreated

Cebu is a study in contrasts—slums of crushing poverty bunched next to glittering beachfront resorts.

It's also where famed Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan met his doom, killed by local warriors in the Battle of Mactan in 1521.

"We don't really want to play that part up too much," Osmeña said.

But a recreation of the battle will be part of the festivities for the weekend, which she said would look at the influences of the Spanish, Malays and Chinese on the culture of the Philippines.

The party will be wined and dined by the First Gentleman tonight in an old customs house overlooking the sea and known locally as the Malacañang Palace of the South.

Fireworks, 'boat ballet'

They will be treated to a fireworks show as well as a choreographed maritime display billed as a "boat ballet."

On Sunday, there will be a bus tour, a performance by children's choirs and that old staple of romance—a picnic in the park.

But while the Philippine government and local officials in Cebu want to put on the best possible show, it's not clear how many spouses will even bother to turn up.

Only four had confirmed their attendance by Thursday, anguished local media reports said.

Summit spokesperson Victoriano Lecaros said some leaders customarily did not bring their spouses on such trips.

An affair to remember

The wedding will be that of Clarice Veloso, scion of a prominent political and landed clan in Cebu and Leyte who studied in the United States, and American Sophio Lugo. They are to tie the knot at the Mandaue National Shrine of St. Joseph.

For the 200 invited guests, rubbing elbows with the Asean VIPs will certainly make the wedding an affair to remember. The guests were each checked for security clearance. *Irene R. Sino Cruz, Inquirer Visayas, AFP*

Gov't raises growth forecast to 6.7% in '07

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS RAISED ITS growth forecast on the economy to between 6.1 and 6.7 percent this year amid improving economic indicators such as the stronger peso and lower inflation rate.

The new official forecast on the country's economic growth for this year was higher than the original target of 5.7 to 6.5 percent for 2007, and the projected 5.5 percent growth for 2006.

The government is bullish that it will attain the revised growth targets for 2007.

"The improvement considered the likely approval of the 2007 budget measure, the strengthening of the peso and a sustained improvement in the current fiscal position," the interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) said in a statement.

DBCC is tasked with setting the government's economic policies and targets. It is composed of officials from the Department of Finance, the National Economic and Development Authority, and the Department of Budget and Management.

The country's economic managers, headed by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, earlier said the passage of the proposed national budget of P1.136 trillion was necessary to realize the government's goal of pump-priming the economy.

They strongly urged Congress to prevent a repeat of the reenactment of the national budget, which restrained the government's ability to spend for the enhancement of basic services and development of the country's infrastructure.

Last year, the government operated using the reenacted budget of 2005 after Congress failed to pass the proposed P1.053 trillion national budget for 2006. The 2005 budget was about P100 billion lower than the one proposed for 2006.

Threats of another budget reenactment arose amid delays in the passage of the proposed 2007 budget caused by conflicting stand of the Lower House and the Senate on the budget's composition.

While the Lower House approved Malacañang's budget proposal, the Senate wanted to remove P4.7 billion allocated for school feeding program on suspicion the funds could be used by the administration in the coming May elections.

Rep. Joey Salceda, however, on Thursday issued a statement that a compromise was already reached between the two chambers of Congress and that the government would no longer have to operate this year under a reenacted budget.

"The Philippine government's economic team thanks Congress for their statesmanship, which will enable the government to provide better health and education services for our people and invest wisely in infrastructure that will improve our global competitiveness and our economy," the economic managers said in a statement.

On the strengthening of the peso, economic managers said this would encourage consumers to boost their spending. A stronger peso makes imported goods cheaper, thus, helping lower commodity prices.

The DBCC has set its official forecast on the average peso-dollar exchange rate for 2007 at between 48 to 50 versus the US dollar. This was stronger than the original target of P51 to P53 to a dollar.

With the government's new forecast on the peso, the projected inflation rate has also been scaled down to only between 3.3 and 3.8 percent from the original target of 4 to 5 percent.

The inflation rate measures the increase in consumer prices. A lower inflation rate is considered beneficial for the economy because it keeps from substantially eroding the consumers' purchasing power.

Aside from the strengthening of the peso, the tempered increase in oil prices was also considered in forecasting a slower inflation rate. From the original assumption of between $67 and $70 a barrel, Dubai crude is now projected to reach only between $61 and $64 a barrel.

Economists said the increase in oil prices was likely to temper in 2007 partly because global demand for oil was expected to slow down.

The DBCC also said exports were expected to grow between 10.5 and 11 percent this year from that of last year.

The Neda earlier said that exports would continue to grow in 2007 because global demand for electronics, the Philippines' major export product, would continue to rise amid the growing popularity of consumer electronics like iPODs, laptops, cellular phones, and the like.

The Philippines exports intermediate electronics products. Intermediate goods are processed raw materials but have to be processed further to become finished products.

DOJ asks court to issue hold order on Abra gov

By Armand N. Nocum

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HAS ASKED the Quezon City regional trial court to issue a hold departure order against Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, saying he may be planning to leave the country.

Valera is a suspect in the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. who was shot dead on the grounds of the Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City last Dec. 16.

State Prosecutor Romeo Senson asked Judge Marilyn Villordon to immediately issue a hold order, citing an intelligence report showing that Valera was planning to leave for abroad despite the fact that he is facing charges.

The justice department has charged Valera and two of his bodyguards, identified as Pedro Castillo and Leo Bello, with illegal possession of firearms and explosives, after several guns and a grenade were found in the governor's van.

Aside from the illegal possession of firearms charges, Valera is also under investigation in connection with the killing of Bersamin, a political rival.

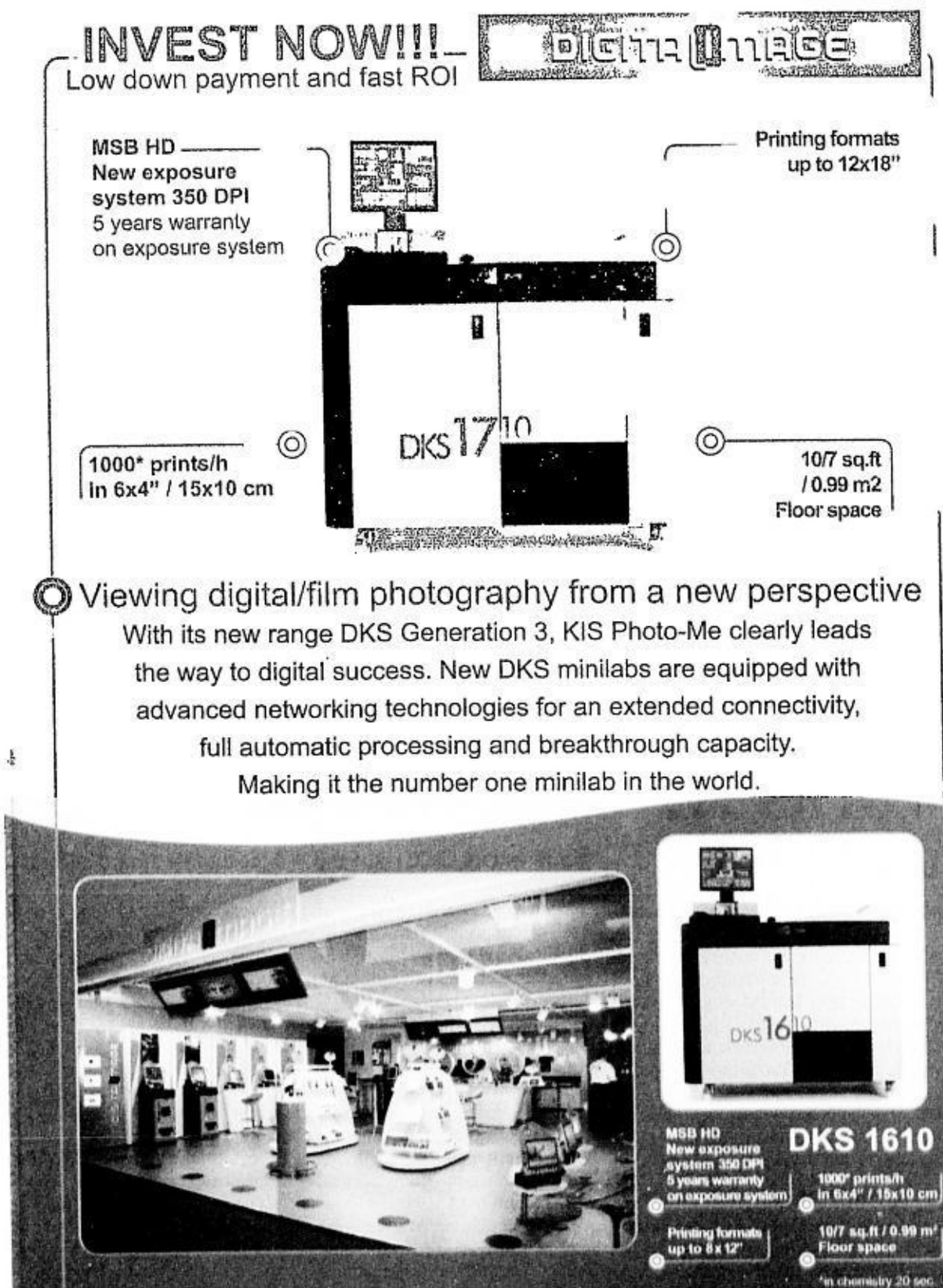
In his resolution, Senson said he found probable cause in filing three counts of illegal possession charges against Valera and his aides, and setting a bail of P310,000 for the governor's temporary liberty.

Similar charges against another of the governor's bodyguards, Oscar Abella, were dropped for lack of evidence.

The prosecutor said the respondents appeared to have conspired "to hold and possess" all the firearms and grenade found in the governor's car.

He noted that any one of the three respondents had unlimited access and use of the firearms found inside the car.

Traffic police who stopped Valera's Suburban van for a traffic violation last month found four .45 caliber pistols, 9mm MP5, and a hand grenade.



'Chavit' considering running fo

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ILOCOS SUR GOV. LUIS "CHAVIT" SINGSON yesterday said he was considering running for senator in the May elections.

Some of his fellow governors in the League of Provinces of the Philippines have been urging him to run for the senate, being "the most experienced" in the group, Singson told the INQUIRER yesterday afternoon before attending the league scheduled general assembly in Pasig City.

Singson, who has held power in his hon province for 30 years, is the league's chair of t board. Fifty-two governors attended the assemb yesterday afternoon; less than 10 faced the medi

Singson, who testified that he used to be 'jueteng' (illegal gambling) bagman for jailed fo mer president Joseph Estrada, was instrumen

Palace urged to speed up sal

By Michael Lim Ubac

TWO HOUSE MEMBERS YESTERDAY CALLED on Malacañang to speed up the sale of the government's 46 percent stake in the Philippine Telecommunication Investments Corp. (PTIC) which indirectly owns part of telecom giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company.

Reps. Eduardo Zialcita of Parañaque and Jacinto Paras of Negros Oriental joined Senator Juan Ponce Enrile and other congressional leaders in supporting the sale of the government sequestered PTIC shares in an auction conducted by the Department of Finance last Dec. 8. A bipartisan resolution signed by House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and Rep. Eduardo Gullas was filed last week in support of the deal.

"The sale is being bogged down by disinformation," said Zialcita as he urged Malacañang to pursue the sale of the government's 111,415 PTIC shares for P25.4 billion to augment the national budget this year.

The government took control of the shares after the Sandiganbayan ruled they were part of the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses.

The shares, nominally registered in the nam of Prime Holdings, correspond to a 46 percen ownership of PTIC. The shares represent a 6 percent indirect stake in PLDT, which, howev do not entitle the owner to vote on the shares rectly or be represented in the PLDT board.

Zialcita defended the bidding against accus tions it was not transparent and that its floor pr was set too low by the DOF.

"How can one be more transparent when DOF conducted the bidding last Dec. 8 in the pre ence of representatives from the Presiden Commission on Good Government, Commiss on Audit, Development Bank of the Philippin and the bidding parties," Zialcita said.

He said the bidding itself was duly announc to the public by a series of advertisements newspapers, while the terms of the public bidding had been fully complied with by the two bidders

The lawmaker also stressed that there was failure of bidding since the DOF received two bi which is the minimum required for a bidding to be declared a failure.

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EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

PER TREAT. It's strawberry season in Baguio City his month there is an unusually huge supply of the . Where they sell for P80 to P100 a kilogram at the io public market, they can now be bought for P50 0/kg along sidewalks and in the strawberry ations of La Trinidad, Benguet.

ière's no denial, y journalists on ike A dismissal suit

ila B. Salaverria

OURNALISTS WHO FILED A CLASS ACTION SUIT st the President's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo d the First Gentleman's motion to dismiss the case randed his answer a "virtual admission" of his abuse right to file cases.

ir lawyer Harry Roque said Arroyo did not contest edia practitioners' claim that he abused his right he initiated a slew of libel cases against journalists.

ère is not a single denial that Mr. Arroyo abused his o file these cases. He only claimed that he had a right these cases, which my clients do not dispute. In the ce of such a denial, the effect is an admission," Roque a statement circulated during a media forum.

ue also contested Arroyo's claim that not all of those rought the suit against him have cause to take action.

de from the journalists sued for libel by the First Gentle- other media practitioners, including INQUIRER columnist do de Quiros, also took part in the filing of the suit.

ording to the Roque, the "chilling effect" of the libel is felt by all members of the media and not just by Arroyo sued.

urt junks Garcia bid quash perjury case

orman Bordadora

SANDIGANBAYAN FOURTH DIVISION HAS d with finality the motion of retired Maj. Gen. Carcia to dismiss one of the four perjury cases filed st him.

antigraft court's ruling finally paves the way for a's prosecution for alleged misdeclaration of his ment of assets, liability and net worth during his as deputy chief of staff for comptrollership of the d Forces of the Philippines.

its resolution dated Jan 10, the Sandiganbayan said ccused failed to come up with new bases in his mo- or reconsideration of the court's ruling on Oct. 31, denying his motion to quash the perjury raps.

e court finds no cogent reason to engage in a repetitive sion, as it becomes an exercise in futility," the court said.

r Senate seat

in starting the impeachment trial against the former president that ended in his ouster in 2001.

Singson said he was offering himself to the administration party which, unlike the political opposition, is yet to announce its list of possible candidates for senate.

"But if the slots are already filled, I could just seek reelection as governor" said Singson, who has served as congressman for one term.

e of PTIC stake

Parallax Venture Fund XXVII, a unit of the Singapore-based Parallax Capital Management LP, submitted the highest bid of P25.4 billion. The other bidder Pan Asia Presidio Capital LP just matched the floor price of P24.9 billion set by the DOF.

But Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co., which owns 54 percent of PTIC, said it would match the bid and take in as partner Japan's NTT DoCoMo Inc., one of the biggest global investors in telecommunications. NTT is also a key shareholder of PLDT.

Zialcita said the PTIC shares could not be valued the same as regular PLDT shares since "they are not easily tradable, thus less liquid and do not come with direct voting rights in PLDT."

"That the DOF priced the PTIC shares for sale at a 15 percent discount of regular PLDT shares is understandable. First, the giving of discounts is but normal in block sales of this magnitude," he said.

"Secondly, the PTIC shares are less liquid as PTIC stockholders and PTIC itself has the option to match any bid for PTIC shares being offered to an outsider," Zialcita said.

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OPINION

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Doomed?

TERRORIST ELEMENTS HAVE NOWHERE TO HIDE and are in fact doomed to annihilation," President Macapagal-Arroyo declared on the eve of the Asean Summit being held in Cebu this week. "We assure all our allies in East Asia and beyond that the Filipino soldiery and people are on watch every hour of the day, determined to do their share to defeat terror for a more secure and safer world."

EDITORIAL

Ms Arroyo was speaking in Jolo, Sulu, a few days after Marines and Navy commandos killed six suspected terrorists during a high-speed sea chase off the coast of Tawi-Tawi. Among the fatalities were two Abu Sayyaf commanders and an Indonesian militant named Gufran, who was said to be a close aide of Dulmatin, another Indonesian terrorist and one of the principal suspects in the 2002 bombings that killed 202 people on the Indonesian resort island of Bali. Dulmatin is a key operative of Jemaah Islamiyah, the Southeast Asian terrorist group affiliated with al-Qaida.

The day after Ms Arroyo spoke, terrorists in Southern Philippines demonstrated that they were neither running and hiding, nor ready to fall and die. Three bombs exploded in three different places in Mindanao Wednesday evening, killing seven people and leaving 40 others wounded. The deadliest attack happened near a lotto outlet in General Santos City where six people died and 32 others were injured. Other explosions occurred in Kidapawan City and Cotabato City, where a garbage collector was killed.

Military investigators said the bombings were carried out by a group under Usman Basit, a former member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front who is said to be working with the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah. "We are embarrassed by this," said Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, who disclosed that preventing bomb attacks was part of the security plans for the Asean Summit.

He can say that again—and again. The series of bombings is, in fact, an embarrassment many times over for the Arroyo administration.

First, the timing of the attacks ensured that they would get more than the usual exposure in the international press, especially in the countries represented at the Summit and in the meetings between Asean and its dialogue partners.

Second, the attacks tended to confirm speculations that the Summit, which was originally scheduled in December, was postponed on account of security concerns. Just a few days before the international meeting was supposed to start, several foreign governments, including the United Kingdom and Australia, issued travel advisories urging their own nationals to stay away from the Summit venue because of alleged terrorist threats. Philippine government officials denied there were such threats and said the Summit was postponed because of an approaching typhoon. The weather bureau said it had not recommended postponement of the meeting. The Summit's postponement and now the Mindanao bombings hardly help restore public trust in an administration already struggling with a credibility problem.

Thirdly, the attacks again expose the Philippines as one of the weakest links in the international war against terrorism, with JI operatives continuing to find sanctuary in the country's second largest island and sharing their bomb-making expertise with homegrown terrorists.

Finally, the recent bombings show the wide gap between official rhetoric and reality. While the President talks as if victory is at hand, terrorism continues to rear its bloody head at the most embarrassing times.

Her latest order, according to Esperon, is for the military to "go after the Abu Sayyaf without sleep and without any break." That is not much different from her assurance that the military and the people are "on watch every hour of the day," and yet nobody seems to have seen the bombs or the bombers coming in the three cities of Mindanao. Everyone would appreciate it more—because they would be feeling safer—if there would be less talk and more action and better results in the campaign against terrorism on the part of Ms Arroyo and her military commanders.

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A self-defanged decision

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

I READ WITH MUCH INTEREST THE DECISION of the Special 16th Division of the Court of Appeals in the case of Lance Cpl. Daniel J. Smith vs. Hon. Benjamin J. Pozon promulgated on Jan. 2, 2007. It was written by Justice Apolinario D. Bruselas Jr., with Justices Josefina Guevara-Salonga and Fernanda Lampas-Peralta both concurring in the result.

This was a petition for certiorari questioning the order of the respondent judge directing the confinement of the petitioner, who had been convicted of rape and sentenced to *reclusion perpetua*, in the Makati City jail. Smith contended that pending his appeal, he was entitled under the Visiting Forces Agreement to be transferred to the custody of the American authorities. He was supported by the public prosecution but opposed by the private prosecutor.

Without waiting for the case to be decided, Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney signed an agreement providing for such transfer. It was implemented by Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno with the support of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on Dec. 29, 2006, and President Macapagal-Arroyo later admitted having ordered the transfer. Last week, the Court of Appeals sustained Judge Pozon but did not order the return of Smith to Philippine custody, holding that the petition had already become moot.

The decision penned by Justice Bruselas deserves some admiration for its analytical and logical consideration of the several important issues raised by the parties, including the solicitor general, who was allowed to intervene in Smith's favor. The court held that the petition was not the appropriate remedy and could have been properly dismissed. Nevertheless, it agreed to accept it and decide it on the merits because of the importance of the questions raised and the parties involved.

The lengthy decision carefully assessed the issues and the arguments submitted. It discussed not only Sec. 6 of the VFA, relied on by Smith as justifying US custody over him until the end of the "judicial proceedings" including the appeal, as opposed by the respondent's contention that the phrase applied only to the end of the trial and not beyond. After meticulously examining not only that section but also all the other pertinent provisions of the agreement, the court concluded in favor of Judge Pozon and held that it was the Philippine and not the US authorities here who had lawful custody of the petitioner.

For all its binding opinion against the petition, however, the decision did not choose to enforce it. After referring to the Romulo-Kenney agreement transferring Smith to the custody of the US government, the *ponencia* copped out and dismissed the petition "for having become moot."

Like a mighty army in the face of total victory, the Court of Appeals folded its tents and slunk away. Where it could have castigated the Executive Department for preempting the Judiciary in its discharge of a purely judicial function, it carefully kept silent. Where it could have ordered the return of Smith to Philippine custody pursuant to its interpretation of the Visiting Forces Agreement, it joined President Arroyo and her Cabinet in paying obeisance to the visiting foreigners.

No wonder the other justices in the division merely concurred "in the result," which brings up another matter. When a justice concurs only in the result, it means he (or she) does not concur with or probably even objects to the reasons for the result. In my humble view, that would make the incomplete concurrence a dissent. Art. VIII, Sec. 14 of the Constitution says, "No decision shall be rendered by any court without expressing therein clearly and distinctly the facts and the law on which it is based." I submit this should apply as well to concurrences only in the result.

This reminds me of the third case of Frivaldo v. Commission on Elections, 257 SCRA 727 that finally recognized the petitioner's Philippine citizenship by an absurd overstretching of the law to accommodate the old man. Only three justices concurred completely with the *ponente*, four only *pro hac vice*, and three only in the result, with two dissenting and two not taking part. Yet it became part of the law of the land.

It is regrettable that such an impressive analysis of the Visiting Forces Agreement and the logical conclusions reached by Justice Bruselas should go to waste as a failed assertion of Philippine sovereignty in our own territory. In surrendering to her American overlords, President Arroyo may have acted in the higher interests of Philippine-American relations, as she defensively says, but it was a disdainful dismissal of our obligatory respect for our own laws. And I am also disappointed in the 38-page *ponencia* of Justice Bruselas with whom his colleagues in the division could not agree but agreed just the same.

Despite the moral weakness of the Court of Appeals, I want to compliment Justice Apolinario F. Bruselas Jr. for his well-written *ponencia* even if it roared like a lion but whimpered in the end. I see in him a worthy member of the judiciary provided he quotes Justice Holmes more accurately and develops more guts. He has a facile pen and writes better than many justices of the Supreme Court past and present, including me.

Free Burma

COMMENTARY

Nono Alfonso, SJ
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE IRONY IS PAINFUL. FOR THE ASEAN summit in Cebu, the Philippine government has been moving heaven and earth to secure the place from any terrorist threat. And yet, it will be playing host to a country whose terrorism against its own citizens is widely known: Burma (Myanmar). While many countries in Asia are opening up toward greater freedom and democracy, Burma, ruled by a military junta, has remained a rogue state. It has arrogantly snubbed diplomatic initiatives from Asean and even from the United Nations that would have paved the way for the restoration of democracy and civil liberties.

Burma was under the British Empire in the late 1900s and remained a colony until 1948, when it finally won its independence under the leadership of Gen. Aung San, the father of freedom fighter Aung San Suu Kyi who has remained in house arrest in the last 11 years. Since the country's independence, the military has ruled the country under many disguises. The current military junta made up of graying generals seized power in 1990 after elections which saw Suu Kyi's opposition party winning a landslide victory. The military junta did not allow the new parliament to sit, bloodily crushed protest rallies, and imprisoned political activists. Since then, it has ruled the country brutally, monopolizing power around the executive branch. Civil liberties have been suspended, including freedom of the press.

In a letter last year to the United Nations, members of parliaments around the globe, including Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Rep. Rissa Hontiveros-Baraquel, enumerated the "crimes" of Burma's military junta. These include: "detaining the world's only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi; imprisoning and torturing opponents, including more than 1,100 political prisoners; using rape as a weapon of war; forcibly recruiting up to 70,000 child soldiers, far more than any other country in the world; causing at least 700,000 refugees to flee across its borders into neighboring countries; forcing over half a million persons from their homes who are scraping out a living as internal refugees, surviving in the jungles and mountains of eastern Burma; burning or otherwise destroying 2,700 villages; forcing humanitarian aid organizations such as Doctors without Borders and the UN's Global Fund on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, to leave Burma as the junta refuses to permit them to carry out their work; maintaining Burma's status as the largest producer of illegal methamphetamines in Southeast Asia, causing devastation of individuals and families throughout the region, and conducting a new military offensive against civilians of the Karen ethnic minority, shooting unarmed civilians, including children, burning villages, using rape, torturing and mutilating people, and even beheading people."

These are not merely Burma's internal problems and therefore they need the concerted effort of the Asian region as well as the world for their resolution. The ethnic cleansing being committed by the military junta has driven hundreds of thousands of people out of its borders, causing refugee problems in the region. Add to this the thousands who migrate to other countries due to poverty caused largely by the military junta's mismanagement of the economy (e.g., 40 percent of the budget goes to the military). This massive movement of people alone should be a great humanitarian concern for the region, if not the world.

Secondly, the country is facing a health crisis that threatens its neighboring countries. Aside from dengue and malaria, which are considered "high risks" in some parts of the country, in 2003, the US government estimated that 20,000 had already died of AIDS and 330,000 more were afflicted with HIV/AIDS. This and the human trafficking that is prevalent make up a ticking time bomb for the region.

Finally, Burma is considered the second largest supplier of opium in the world. It is also a major source of methamphetamine and heroin. The military junta has turned a blind eye to this, because the drug cartel provides a lot of cash for the country. Such drug trafficking goes against the serious efforts to combat the scourge of illicit drugs of other countries in Asia, including the Philippines.

In 2003, the US imposed an economic blockade on the country following the latest house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi (she was incarcerated from 1989 to 1995, 2000 to 2002, and May 2003 to the present). However, the blockade has not weakened the military regime. Asian countries such as India, China, Korea, Thailand and Singapore continue to have economic ties with Burma, a resource-rich country with natural gas as its major export. Truly, if Asean and the other regional groupings are serious about putting pressure on the country, they must consider strengthening the economic embargo against the country.

In the meantime, all eyes are on the UN Security Council which this year is poised to discuss the case against Burma. Reportedly, Russia and China are hesitant to impose pressures on the country, lamely reasoning that the UN only comes in when global peace and security are being threatened, despite precedents of UN intervention in regional conflicts in the past. Nobel Prize laureates Archbishop Desmond Tutu and economist Amartya Sen have recently called on every peace-loving citizen in the world to join the campaign against the repressive military junta in Burma. Their call joins the many voices that are now clamoring for changes in Burma.

The Philippines, which has its own experience of martial law and which valiantly resists the tendencies of government to go back to the darkest period of our history, must enlist in this campaign to free Burma. Let us heed Aung San Suu Kyi's plea: "Those who enjoy freedom, use your freedom to promote ours!"

Defensor's trial balloon confusing everyone

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST THURSDAY, I WROTE ABOUT THE HAPLESS efforts of politicians forming a "Third Force" in the decades immediately following the grant of independence. Invariably, despite the big names that joined the "Third Force" as well as the "Fourth Force" of Claro Recto and Jose P. Laurel, they ended up third and fourth in the national elections. Their defeat was largely due to the fact that only the two major parties then, the Liberal Party and the Nacionalista Party, had inspectors.

During the 1971 Constitutional Convention, perennial Third Force candidate Raul Manglapus, who chaired the electoral reform committee, batted for the multi-party system. He argued that what we had was one party with two factions and without any political ideology.

* * *

The period after Edsa I saw the rise of the multi-party system and countless "Third Force" groups. Notable among them was the Lakas-Tao Party of Fidel V. Ramos, which was grafted from the ruling LDP. With President Corazon Aquino's backing, Ramos became the administration candidate in 1992. That year also saw the phenomenal rise of Miriam Defensor-Santiago who came closest to winning the presidency under a "Third Force" party.

How will the still party-less "Wednesday Club" reelectionists led by Senate President Manuel Villar make under a Third Force? My thinking is, if they join the more acceptable elements in the Estrada-led opposition, it has a good chance of capturing the imagination of the electorate. But that's a big if, given former President Joseph Estrada's well-founded objection to a Third Force, which he believes could weaken the opposition. President Macapagal-Arroyo's Lakas is still the *llamado* in the countryside because of the local officials' support and the public works projects she's spreading all around.

* * *

It's hard to understand the game that Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor is playing these days. His proposal that former President Estrada be released on recognizance cannot prosper. Defensor, who's running for the Senate, proposed Estrada's release while waiting for the verdict of the Sandiganbayan on his plunder case. Defensor said this move would promote reconciliation and unity. It has the support of the President, he added.

It's obviously a trial balloon, but it's causing confusion. First of all, the case against Estrada—plunder—is a non-bailable offense, so he cannot be temporarily released while awaiting the verdict of the court. Otherwise, hundreds of others charged with non-bailable offenses must be accorded the same privilege. Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol explained that recognizance is granted only in cases involving minor offenses. The strong negative reaction of Lakas members to Defensor's proposal is understandable. If Estrada can convert an eight-hour "leave" from Tanay (to attend a family gathering) into a political offensive, how much more will he be able to do if he were granted temporary liberty during this election year.

I can understand the former president's predicament, but the best way to ease his suffering is for the Sandiganbayan to rule on his five-year old case. The case is causing so much instability and delaying the decision is unfair to Estrada.

* * *

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita called up to protest that his statements on former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez were twisted. He asserted that what he said was that, considering that Perez used to be a Cabinet member, the Palace was with him "in spirit." He never said that the Palace would intervene in the case or that the Ombudsman's decision to file charges of extortion against Perez "would open a Pandora's box." The insinuation, said Ermita, is that the Perez case would damage other personalities in the administration, and this is unfair. "I don't even know what Pandora is all about," he quipped.

* * *

Reconciliation and forgiveness remain loaded buzz words. Toward the end of last year, I attended the glittering award ceremonies at the Meralco Theater for Peace Prize 2006 of the Gusi Peace Prize Foundation, chaired by Barry S. Gusi, with former PCSO Chair Manuel L. Morato as president. The 15 international awardees were most distinguished, among them former President Ramos, who was cited for statesmanship, and Supreme Master Ching Hai of the United Kingdom and Vietnam, an exponent of Buddhism recognized for her world-wide philanthropy and humanitarianism. The awardees received their trophies from President Arroyo.

* * *

Considering the impressive bio data of the awardees, it's a wonder that this annual award is not so very well known. One of the awardees is writer-director-producer Carlo J. Caparas, who was recognized as International Awardee for Creative Arts and Popular Literature," more specifically, as "King of Komiks," a discipline in pop literature defined during the May 2006 International Theater Congress in Manila as "the illustrated theater of the world." Caparas delivered a very interesting acceptance speech which went this way:

"The three most important elements in life are Love, Hate and Forgiveness. When there is love, there's hate. The healthiest relationship is love-hate. Why? Because there's forgiveness in that relationship. For love-hate to prosper, forgiveness plays an important role. *Marami sa atin, marunong magmahal, marunong magalit, pero hindi marunong magpatawad. Kaya nagiging magulo sa Pilipinas. Sinasakyan nila kahit pagkakamali lang, para lalo pang magalit.* In fact, *ginagawa pa nilang kasalanan ang pagkakamali, para maging puhunan iyon nang higit pang galit.* Mistakes can be corrected, but done repeatedly, it becomes a sin that's punishable and cannot be corrected anymore.... *Sa pulitika sa Pilipinas, hindi marunong magpatawad ang mga talunan.*"

Clearly Caparas was referring to GMA, the evening's guest of honor, but who was no longer around to hear his "forgiving" speech.

'Ginang Low Tech'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

FOR MY BIRTHDAY, MY HUSBAND GAVE ME A digital camera. For years, I had been suggesting, not too subtly, that when "we had money"—a theoretical eventuality that somehow never materializes—we should get a digital camera for taking snapshots on our trips. Our "idiot-proof" film cameras had, one by one, fallen by the wayside, and I was growing envious of my travel mates' digital cameras and their instant means of checking their photos.

But my husband, being the photography buff and perfectionist that he is, insisted that he either get a high mega-pixel capacity camera or not at all. But since these cameras are quite expensive, we never got around to getting one, that is, until this recent birthday.

As I unwrapped the package, I dug through the plastic and paper and wondered where the camera was, until my daughter fished out something slightly smaller than a cell phone, which happened to be the camera. At once, she started fiddling with the thing and taking shots, while I struggled to get used to handling it. Never mind, I told myself, I'd read through the manual when we got home and familiarize myself with how the thingamajig worked.

Well, let's just say that my brain waves gave out long before the words in the manual sunk in. I was stumped just following the indicator arrows for the camera's various functions and buttons. "Dad," I nudged my drowsy bedmate, "I give up. You read these and just teach me how to operate the camera."

The way I figure it, as long as I know how to aim and shoot and review the photos I had taken—I'm still deathly afraid of deleting—I'd be fine. This is what my kids lament about me and my hi-tech toys. "*Sayang lang* (They're wasted on you)," they sigh, as they look at me use my cell phone which is capable of sending and receiving e-mail and multi-media messages, but which has been confined to calls, text messaging and keeping track of appointments. Oh yes, it also functions as a pretty good alarm clock!

* * *

I REMEMBER what a friend, who is older than me, told me about her never-ending struggle to keep up with technology: "I had just learned how to operate the fax machine when my children told me about e-mail. But I can't even operate my computer!"

I thought I was myself fairly up-to-date with information technology, being intimately acquainted with the wonders of e-mail. Much of the exchange of materials in the course of preparing a book on the Braganzas, the maternal side of my family, for instance, has been done through e-mail, since most of my cousins now live in the United States. We use an e-group to send articles, exchange views and even share photos.

But I recently realized how far back I have fallen when I was informed by California-based Braganza cousins about a meeting we will be hosting tonight in our home. Is it possible for us to "sit in" on the meeting, asked my cousin Malou Braganza. All we needed to do, she said, is tell her the exact time we would be meeting and they would stay up and wait to connect with us. We could communicate by webcam, through Skype or YM, a shortcut for Yahoo Messenger.

I had heard these terms before, of course. But I was clueless about how to make them work. Naturally, I fell back on the time-tested means that adults use to catch up on technology: I would ask my children about it, I told Malou.

* * *

IF IT seems I play a hopeless game of catch-up with developments in technology, you can imagine how breathless the race is among real techies, men and women who have built careers around understanding not just owners' manuals, but software, programming, shareware, hardware development, and the rest of the arcane field of knowledge of IT.

The latest news in the field is that the value of the shares of Nokia, the Finnish paper company that is now better known around the world as a cell phone manufacturer, fell by about 2 percent after Apple unveiled its new iPhone, a device based on Apple's best-selling iPod, which allows the owner not just to store and retrieve music, but also to make calls and everything else now possible with 3G phones.

The iPhone, from what I heard, brings the world closer to the Holy Grail: the device that can do everything. Frankly, I don't know why companies keep making PCs, laptops, cell phones, palm tops, portable recorders, still cameras and video cameras, and TVs, when their eventual goal is to produce a device that can do everything all these products can.

Reminds me of those portable rechargeable fans that sold like hot *pan de sal* in the days of the whole-day brownouts, and eventually combined so many functions—a radio, lamp, emergency flasher, maybe even a microwave—it soon reached absurd levels.

I'm sure there's a market out there for the iPhone, but I wonder how it will fare with people like me. Reading the manual alone must be a nightmare!

* * *

I HAPPEN to have been a Nokia user since the time cell phones still had antennae that brushed rooftops. I don't know if it's a matter of intellectual arrogance, but every cell phone brand employs a different system, a unique process of logic that, if you're so used to a particular system, makes it annoying, if not fairly exasperating, to try another phone brand.

If they could negotiate the World Trade Organization, I wonder why no one bothered to enforce a "unified" system of cell phone services. Anyway, my point is that however wondrous the functions of the iPhone are, I'm not about to abandon my familiar Nokia yet. It's not just brand loyalty—it's more a matter of intellectual laziness.

Then again, maybe it's just me, "Ginang Low Tech," on whom the latest gizmos are wasted and who never gets to finish reading those damned manuals.

Germany, Europe and Russia

WORLD VIEW

Yuliya Tymoshenko

EUROPEAN UNITY IS INDIVISIBLE. WHEN ONE nation is intimidated or ostracized, all are not free. Every aspect of our shared culture, if not the last century of shared suffering, confirms that for us.

So a prime objective of the European Union is to promote stability and security through a dynamic structure of economic and political inter-dependence in which all nations have a vested interest. But such a structure is lacking today between the EU and Russia, to the detriment of all the countries that lie between them. Thus it is vitally important that Germany has made this a central issue for its EU presidency, which is just beginning.

With high prices for crude oil and natural gas bloating its coffers, Russia is once again aggressively confronting the small and still relatively weak states that fled the eroding Soviet empire 15 years ago. Given the residual economic and institutional ties born of the Soviet era, Russia's external influence in this region remains enormous. But Russia is also now extending its grasp of energy markets beyond those of its immediate neighbors.

Europe's relationship with Russia is too important for it to be developed in an ad hoc fashion through bilateral arrangements. Today is Europe's moment of maximum flexibility; as dependence on Russian energy supplies grows, the EU's leverage weakens.

Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the Cold War, it has often been assumed that Russia's hostile intentions have disappeared, and foreign policy toward Russia has been conducted as if traditional diplomatic considerations no longer apply. But, of course, they do apply. Encouraging economic and political reforms is an important objective, but it can never serve as a substitute for a serious effort to contain Russia's deep-seated expansionism.

To be sure, Russia has legitimate security interests in what has been called its "near abroad." But Europe's stability and commitment to economic growth across the continent require that these interests be satisfied without economic pressure or unilateral intervention.

A viable Russia policy for Europe must recognize Europe's growing dependence on Russian energy resources. To proceed otherwise would discount the most important question: the reliability of Russia as an energy supplier.

Despite controlling the world's largest gas reserves, Russia's state-owned monopoly Gazprom is not producing enough for an economy growing at 6 percent a year. Gazprom's three largest fields, which account for three-quarters of its output, are in decline. This domestic shortage means that Gazprom is unable to increase supply to Europe, at least in the short term, unless it can buy gas at below-market rates from its Eastern European and Central Asian neighbors and in turn sell it to its European customers at market prices. At the same time, Russia wants to cater to other markets, notably along its eastern frontier.

The problem is not a lack of reserves, but Gazprom's investment strategy. In recent years, the company has spent vigorously on everything but developing its reserves. It has built or is building pipelines to Turkey and Germany, taken over an oil company, and sought footholds in European distribution markets. Instead of investing in discovering oil, Gazprom has become the biggest media group in Russia. All this is done in the name of creating and supporting a national energy champion which also serves as a foreign policy arm of the Kremlin.

Meanwhile, with investment in Gazprom's core activity—production—steadily declining, a crisis is looming, one that requires EU's stewardship and steady hand. Gazprom's ambitions for gaining control of pipeline and energy transport infrastructure must be slowed, which requires allowing independent producers to prosper. Indeed, independent producers already account for 20 percent of domestic gas sales in Russia. To boost their output and allow them direct access to European markets will require market-based incentives.

Europe can help by insisting that Russia participate in the European Energy Charter, which calls for Gazprom to grant its production competitors access to Russian pipelines, and for all disputes to be settled by international arbitration. European competition policy, which successfully brought giant companies like Microsoft into line to promote competition, can help turn Gazprom into a normal competitor, too.

Europe's leaders should engage in frank discussions about where European and Russian interests converge or differ, and these discussions should include regional neighbors that are both producer and transit nations, like my own country, Ukraine. Moscow will understand a policy based on mutual respect for each other's interests better than simple appeals to goodwill and friendship.

Russia should be welcome in institutions and agreements that foster cooperation, with reciprocal rights and responsibilities. Russian reform will be impeded, not nurtured, by turning a blind eye to political and economic aggression. The hard-fought independence of the former Soviet republics must not be tacitly traded away in acquiescence to Russia's desire for regional hegemony.

Russia's leaders are entitled to the world's understanding as they struggle to overcome generations of Soviet misrule. But they are not entitled to the sphere of influence that Russian tsars and commissars coveted for 300 years. If Russia is to be a serious partner for Europe, it must be ready to accept the obligations of stability along with the benefits. If Europe is to ensure its prosperity and energy security, it must demand nothing less.

Project Syndicate

Yuliya Tymoshenko, Ukraine's former prime minister, is currently leader of the opposition.

Why not?

YOUNG BLOOD

Che Zablan

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I AM A DOCTOR TO THE BARRIO. FOR MOST PEOPLE, I could not have made a better choice, but for a very few, I could not have made a worse or crazier one. In fact, the moment I utter those words, I see all sorts of reactions.

My family and friends are primarily concerned over my safety. After all, I could be assigned anywhere in the Philippines.

My superiors and colleagues, on the other hand, are afraid that I might stagnate professionally. The normal course for a newly licensed physician is to specialize. I won't be able to do that in the rural areas.

Most people who first hear about my decision give me that you-must-be-crazy look and demand to know why. I have learned to just smile and vaguely explain that I really have nothing better to do or that I haven't decided which medical field to specialize in. Sometimes, I am tempted to lie and say I am going abroad. This answer, I am sure, I would not have to explain myself.

It never fails to amaze me that people find it unusual that a young doctor would decide to work in the barrios and normal for him to work abroad. I thought I'd never find the perfect answers to all their questions until I was sent to a highland municipality in Ilocos Sur.

My father felt reassured when I told him I have never felt safer in my entire life. I don't speak Ilocano. I don't know a single soul in the place. But when I walk on the street, everybody greets me. My dining table never runs out of fruits and vegetables given by the people. They invite me to dine in their homes although I am a total stranger.

This is contrary to what I experience every day in Manila. In the city, everybody speaks Filipino, but I feel like I could be mugged anytime. I could go around the whole metropolis without a single soul greeting me, much less inviting me to dine with their families. I am actually starting to feel that my family and friends in the city are the ones who need to take care.

It was tough to put on hold my dream of becoming an OB-gyn. However, I can still train to be one in a couple of years. That can wait, but the patients I serve might not make it if they don't see a doctor right now. And while I may have put on hold my professional growth, I am definitely working on my personal growth.

I finally understood what being alone means on my first night and being independent on my first week here. I've realized what determination means when I see children walking five kilometers to get to school. I see what hard work means every time I see a farmer working under the sun in the middle of the day. Most importantly, I am learning what a doctor should do: to make a difference in people's lives.

There are nights when I feel like paying a thousand bucks just to have a cup of caramel macchiato or pay slightly less than that for a choco nutty sprinkle donut. However, these cravings are gone as soon as I get freshly brewed *kapeng barako* and *kalamay*—of course, for free.

On days when I can't find the perfect medicine or order the ideal laboratory procedure, I am sorely tempted to take a bus back to Manila. But these are soon forgotten when I cross hanging bridges and rivers or walk along rice terraces just to see my patients.

When I get the you-must-be-crazy look, I tell people about the hanging bridges and rice terraces, but most of all about the barrio's most important treasure: its people. They make my job so much easier. When they say thank you, they mean it. When they ask me how I am, they care enough to wait for my response. These are the people who teach me every day that simple living is so much better.

But when I am sick of answering why I chose to be a doctor to the barrio, I just say, "Why in the world not?"

Che Zablan, 28, is employed under the Department of Health's Doctors to the Barrios Program.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

IN THE NEWS

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno

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Requiring candidates to plant trees would be fun

IN 2004, ALL CANDIDATES WERE REQUIRED to undergo a drug test before the Commission on Elections approved their petition to run in the elections. I think not one candidate was found guilty of using illegal drugs. (They were not drug dependents, just drug lords).

For the 2007 elections, why not require candidates—from senatorial "wanna-bes" down to would-be local chieftains—to plant a tree in their respective barangays. Before approving a petition for candidacy, the Comelec should require a candidate to submit a certificate, signed by a barangay chairman, that he/she has planted a tree this year. Imagine the thousands of trees which will be planted in 79 provinces, 115 cities and 1,500 municipalities. This undertaking will complement the Green Philippines Highways project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Luntiang Pilipinas of former Sen. Loren Legarda and the one-billion-trees program of Speaker Jose De Venecia.

Planting a tree is the least a candidate can do for the environment. Candidates will consume tons of paper for their election paraphernalia. They will dot the entire length and breadth of the Philippine archipelago with huge streamers containing their ugly, albeit smiling, faces. Many of these campaign ads will be posted on trees.

This project will also be an opportunity to ridicule politicians who are known coddlers, if not operators, of illegal logging, large-scale mining and timber smuggling. Imagine how embarrassing tree-planting could be for a candidate whose business directly leads to the destruction of our environment.

Hopefully, this will partially instill pro-environment consciousness among public officials. Environmental protection could be added to their election agenda. After winning or losing in the elections, candidates may continue with this "green" crusade. Perhaps, nature will guide the superstitious on whom to vote for in the next elections. Good leaders breed tall and strong trees, while bad politicians leave behind only tree stumps.

To plant a tree is not a difficult requirement. In fact, it was a requirement in a government program in 2004. Scholars of the Student Assistance Fund for Education and Strong Republic (SAFE for SR) were required to plant trees before they were given their subsidy. We should be more firm in compelling politicians to plant trees. They always profess their concern for our children and love of country. Well, one way to prove this is to plant trees.

Trees breathe life into the surroundings and are a beauty to behold. For candidates, what is one intimate hour of communing with nature to three months of dirty election campaigning and three years of disappointing public governance that, most likely, will just result in the destruction of trees?

—RAYMOND PALATINO,
president, Kabataan Party,
mongpalatino@gmail.com

A national language will help unite us

OUR NEIGHBOR-COUNTRIES, WHO HAVE surpassed us in economic performance are the best proof why we should have a national language. A national language will bind us together. In unity, there is strength and progress.

Filipino, our national language, has been languishing for years on the sideline. Why? Because all our past presidents, except Manuel Quezon wouldn't admit that Filipino is "the way to go."

There is no escaping the Filipino language. This is our own. Let's face it, we have tried English, but no matter how, we are tongue-tied when we speak it. We can only speak English in spurts, from memorized phrases. After that, we are lost. Let's admit it, English is not for us. We know we can better express our thoughts if we do it in Filipino. Written English, maybe, but not oral English—no way.

So why don't we develop the Filipino language?

—JOEY CAPARAS,
East Fairview, Quezon City

LETTERS TO THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Of cowards and traitors

THE OLD DICTUM "WHEN IN ROME, do as the Romans do." This is, of course, just another way of saying we must respect the laws of a country where we stay as visitors or guests, meaning, as non-citizens.

The Americans' insistence on changing the import of that dictum by insisting on the "rights" of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith under the Visiting Forces Agreement reveals their inclination to dominate the world.

As Filipinos, we should be concerned that our own leaders have violated our country's laws by turning Smith to US custody, as if to say that the Americans may do whatever they please while they are in our country. Because they do not have the guts to protect the Filipino people's interests, our leaders should be considered "traitors" and be made to face the consequences of their action. It is as simple as that, so let us not confuse the issue.

—ERNESTO K. MAGTOTO,
ernestomagtoto@yahoo.com

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It's not elitism, it's common sense

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER OF David San Juan (PDI, 1/8/07), titled "As elitist as the 'trapo' parties," in which he questioned Ang Kapatiran Party's position requiring candidates for president, vice president, senators and congressmen to have a college or university degree. He calls this requirement elitism; Ang Kapatiran calls it common sense.

With malice towards none, and with charity for all, this requirement was written into the platform of Ang Kapatiran jn order to ensure that any candidate would have the educational background to help him/her do the job well. That's not elitism. That's common sense.

In order to prevent the "educated" from being corrupt, Ang Kapatiran must believe in and live by the founding principles of the party, accept and pledge to implement the entire platform of the party, accept the notion of "servant-leader," be morally, physically and technically fit to serve, and accept the party's code of conduct.

All things being equal, let us say there are two candidates for employment who are good, honest, sincere and morally upright for the same position: one has a college or university degree, but the other has none. Who do you think would be the choice of the employer? The choice is obvious. San Juan said that "Democracy is the rule of the people and it's all about who gets elected. Everybody of eligible age must be allowed to run. We should not blame the masses for voting uneducated clowns or mal-educated intellectuals." We in Ang Kapatiran beg to disagree.

Filipinos deserve highly qualified, experienced and morally upright leaders, and it is the duty of every political party—not just Ang Kapatiran—to put forward the best possible candidates. And together with their respective platforms, let the Filipino people decide.

—NANDY PACHECO,
secretary general,
Ang Kapatiran,
angkapatiranparty@yahoo.com

Without check and balance, democracy is doomed

THE DICTUM, "ETERNAL VIGILANCE is the price of liberty" is a warning given to citizens of all governments. This appears to be all the more relevant to weak democracies such as ours.

The total loss of public trust in our leaders, compounded with their propensity to test public opinion and/or judicial response to brinkmanship limits, does not allow the citizenry to drop its guard. The state of constant alert in effect robs the country of energies that could be otherwise spent for gainful pursuits. Little wonder the economy continues to stagnate.

The Cha-cha (Charter change) conspiracy entices the electorate with the illusory "efficiencies" of a unicameral-parliamentary form of government, at the price of giving away the essence of checks and balances and ultimately our liberty. Perhaps unwittingly, the conspiracy played out an ominous preview of how a unicameral-parliamentary model would perform without the benefit of this constitutional sanction.

Certain amendments to the Constitution appear desirable. However, a revision so drastic as to remove the keystone of enduring democracies—that is, checks and balances—will doom our nation to a government of knaves and slaves.

—ALFREDO V. ASUNCION,
93 Castrillo St.,
Barangay Ugong Norte,
Quezon City 1110

Police and military should be made to answer for series of bombings

YET ANOTHER BOMBING, THIS TIME IN MY home city, General Santos City. This is too much.

From television news reports here in Hong Kong, I get the impression that Philippine police, military and officials figured out nothing new about the bombings: diversionary tactics, the handiwork of rebels or terrorists. And they knew of it beforehand. Why they failed to prevent the bombings, they have not explained clearly. Instead, they blame the community for either being lax or for not reporting suspicious persons or movements.

Never have we heard the police and military admitting their ineptness in fulfilling their duty to protect the people. Never have they admitted that they need to improve their capabilities and competencies. They never learn from their previous mistakes. This is no longer just an issue of armed groups out of control—pity the poor civilians who happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. This is a serious, basic issue of security and protection, not only in my home city, but all over the country.

Why did our police and military, despite the millions of pesos for their intelligence operations, again fail to protect us? Their admission that they had at least previous knowledge about the plot to bomb several areas of the country does not mitigate their failure. It was precisely because they had "previous knowledge" that their failure became the more unjustifiable. How can ordinary citizens now rely on them for security and protection?

Worst of all, they are not made accountable for their failure. Unless the police and the military are made to answer for their failure to protect us, security and protection will remain a dream, no, a nightmare for most Filipinos.

—DANILO REYES,
16 G/F, Nam Kau Kak Tin Village,
Tai Wai, New Territories,
Hong Kong, SAR

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INQUIRER Visayas

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THE $10,000 CAR RIDE

Good relations with strangers sometimes pay off

By Alex Pal
Dumaguete City

FOUNDER'S DAY WAS ONE OF those busy times at the Silliman University in Dumaguete City in August last year when law professor Mikhail Lee Maxino and his wife Inday saw visiting alumnus Rolando V. del Carmen.

A distinguished professor of criminal justice at the Sam Houston State University in Texas, Del Carmen was about to board a tricycle back to his hotel. Maxino called out to him, introduced himself and offered to drive him to his place.

That was the last time they saw or heard of each other. Or was it?

Maxino, former dean of the SU College of Law, was soon named first director of the newly created Dr. Jovito R. Salonga Center for Law and Development on campus. Part of his job was to look for funds to sustain the center's operation.

ROLANDO del Carmen

Reply

Money was needed to construct a building at an estimated cost of P5 million, as well as a P10-million endowment fund for operating expenses.

After sending out e-mails to lawyers, friends and alumni, Maxino received a reply one day from the stranger he had driven for. Del Carmen and his wife Josie were offering to donate $10,000.

While explaining that he was making the donation because of his emotional ties to Senator Salonga, who like him, is a son of a Protestant minister, Del Carmen said Maxino's gesture of giving him a ride touched him deeply.

"I must honestly tell you that without your personal participation, this donation would not have been possible at all. I salute you and want you to know good relations with strangers sometimes do pay off. Please share that with your wife because she was just as gracious," Del Carmen told Maxino.

Blessings

"I could hardly believe it. I never thought that a small act of kindness, which I had even forgotten about, would one day come back with blessings for the Salonga Law Center and for Silliman University. It was the single biggest donation we have received so far," Maxino said.

While Del Carmen gives scholarships and other forms of financial support to Silliman, this was his largest donation, "as an expression of our loud applause for those who have already given."

"We also hope it will spur others to give to such a worthy cause in honor of a truly remarkable individual," the benefactor said.

"To me and thousands of others, Senator Salonga exemplifies the quintessential model of an ideal public servant. I am glad Silliman and the College of Law have deemed it proper to bestow upon him this honor which he so highly deserves," he continued.

The Salonga Law Center operates under the College of Law, with the dean as convenor.

Contributions

Maxino said that since it was created in August 2006, the center had already made significant contributions to legal development. It has three programs—environmental law, social justice and human rights, and labor law.

It has sponsored a lecture of then Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban, discussing the overall directions of the Philippine Supreme Court.

The center wrote a paper on the legal implications of the Guimaras oil spill last year.

Another activity involved free lectures and training sessions to barangay officials and *tanod* (village watchmen) on legal arrests, search and seizure, duties and responsibilities of the guards, neighborhood watch, Katarungang Pambarangay, and mediation skills.

Independent statistics

Maxino said the center will also serve as a database facility, providing independent statistics on topics such as population, health, economic growth, and political participation.

Researches will also be used to critically analyze and critique Philippine and international law. Opinion and analyses will be incorporated in a publication, to be made available to government offices, academic institutions, and NGOs.

Maxino said some of the specific research interests of the Salonga Law Center are:

- Creation of special courts to handle violations of traffic rules, ordinances and other small claims.
- Revisit the developmental programs of the government, such as agrarian reform, Filipinization program, etc., to determine if these have promoted economic and social development.
- "Shepardize" Philippine law and jurisprudence. This is a system introduced by Frank Shepard in the early 1870s tracking the discussion of principles of law in court opinions to speed up the entire legal and judicial system and processes.

LAWYER Mikhail Lee Maxino (extreme right) with Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban

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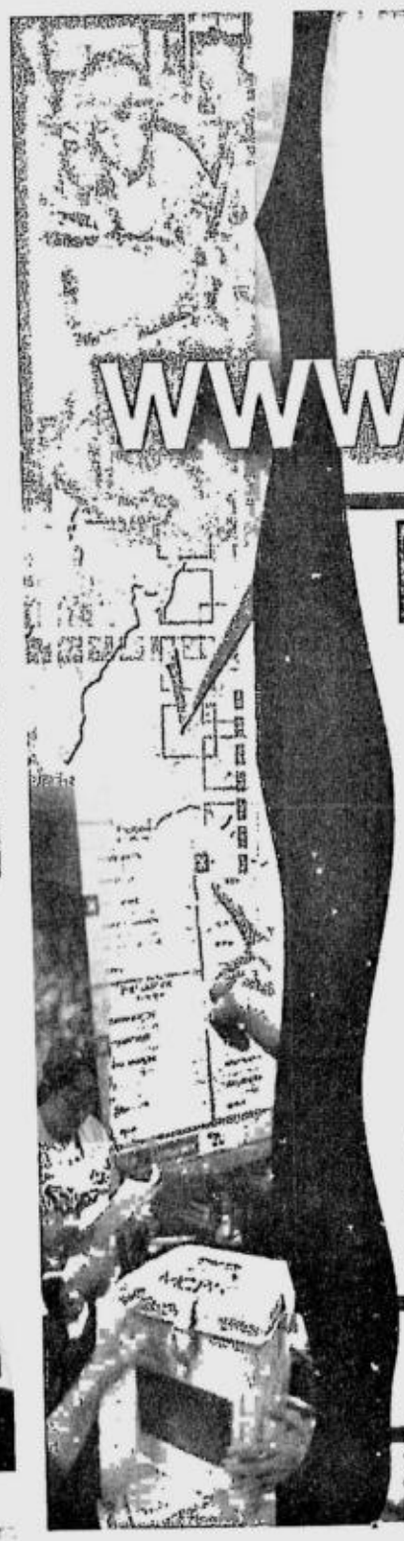

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Army target: 5 communist reb fronts

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CAMP AQUINO, TARLAC CITY—FIVE COMMUNIST guerrilla fronts in four regions where the New People's Army has first taken root since its founding in 1969, are targeted for dismantling this year, the Army's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) chief said on Thursday.

That was the "minimum" goal in the Ilocos, Cordillera, Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon regions, Lt. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos told the INQUIRER after a media forum held before the traditional commander's call here.

He did not specify the provinces where those fronts are located. These are among the 20 fronts that the NPA maintains in the four regions, he said.

At least nine fronts are based in Central Luzon where the communist army was established.

Ramos said the goal was attainable because Nolcom was concentrating one brigade or two battalions of between 1,200 and 1,500 soldiers for every front.

"There is no fighting ratio because there is one rebel for every 10 soldiers," he said, referring to Nolcom's strength of 10,000 and the NPA's 1,000 fighters.

He did not say if, in that plan, he would withdraw troops sent last May in major urban and rural towns to cripple the logistics, financial and mass support bases of the rebels.

While the number of rebels has diminished over the years due to encounters and "internal weaknesses," Ramos said the NPA continued to be "capable of terrorist activities and violence."

Ramos denied disenchantment and lack of moral courage in the ranks of Nolcom troops following reports of massive corruption in the military.

Such allegations, he said, have been frequently played up in the media "by some disgruntled elements in the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)."

He said AFP chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., continued to provide a "leadership of example for soldiers to have moral courage to win against the insurgency."

Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan said the regional police contributed significantly to the anti-insurgency drive through the arrest last year of three top leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its rival, the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines in Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Bataan. *With a report from Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

THESE ARE among more than 50 dead and stuffed turtles found in the vessel King King Hai caught in June 2006 in the vicinity of Balabac, Palawan. The vessel was ordered released by Judge Toribio Ilao of the Regional Trial Court in Palawan, the same judge who ordered the release of 30 Chinese poachers caught in the Tubbataha Reef.
PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLDWIDE FUND

Judge also releases boat with turtles

THE PALAWAN JUDGE WHO RElased 30 Chinese poachers caught in the Tubbataha Reef also released a Chinese fishing boat that was loaded with stuffed turtles, the INQUIRER learned Thursday.

Angelique Songco, manager of the Tubbataha Marine Office, said Judge Torribio Ilao, of Branch 52 of the Puerto Princesa Regional Trial Court, issued a release order for the King King Hai boat last Tuesday.

Songco said the boat was released to its captain, a certain Chuang Huang Dhu.

Ilao's sala is assigned as the environment court in Palawan, also known as the last bastion of untouched natural resources in the country.

The release of the boat was given out on the same day Ilao ordered the authorities to free the 24 arrested Chinese nationals from the Palawan Provincial Jail.

The freed poachers were among the 30 crew members of a boat who were arrested by TMO personnel while illegally entering the protected Tubbataha Reefs National Park last Dec. 21, 2006.

Songco said King King Hai was intercepted last June 17, 2006 off the waters of Mangsee Island in Balabac, Palawan.

She said upon inspection, they found 26 stuffed sea turtles of different sizes and belonging to several species.

Nine crew members of the boat are still jailed at Puerto Princesa, she said.

"This is really very alarming. Its captain might sell the stuffed turtles," Songco said in a mobile phone conversation.

She said that aside from the sea turtles, they also found bags of cotton, bottles of formalin and other paraphernalia used in stuffing the marine animals.

"This only showed that once they catch the turtles, the Chinese fishermen will kill and stuff these while still on board. They have complete paraphernalia on their boat," Songco said.

She said the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has filed a motion for reconsideration to block the boat captain from getting hold of the stuffed sea turtles.

Songco said Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes had requested the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to immediately issue a hold-departure order against the crew members of Hoi Wan. *Marlon Ramos and Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Cops arrest pol, son; seize guns, bullets

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—AGENTS FROM the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group arrested on Wednesday a former town mayoral candidate and his son and seized eight guns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition during a raid on their residence in Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental.

Arrested and detained at the CIDG lock-up cell were businessman Francisco "Frank" Nazareno and his son, Jocko, for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.

Nazareno ran for mayor in Moises Padilla town in the 2004 election but lost to incumbent Mayor Jose Garcia.

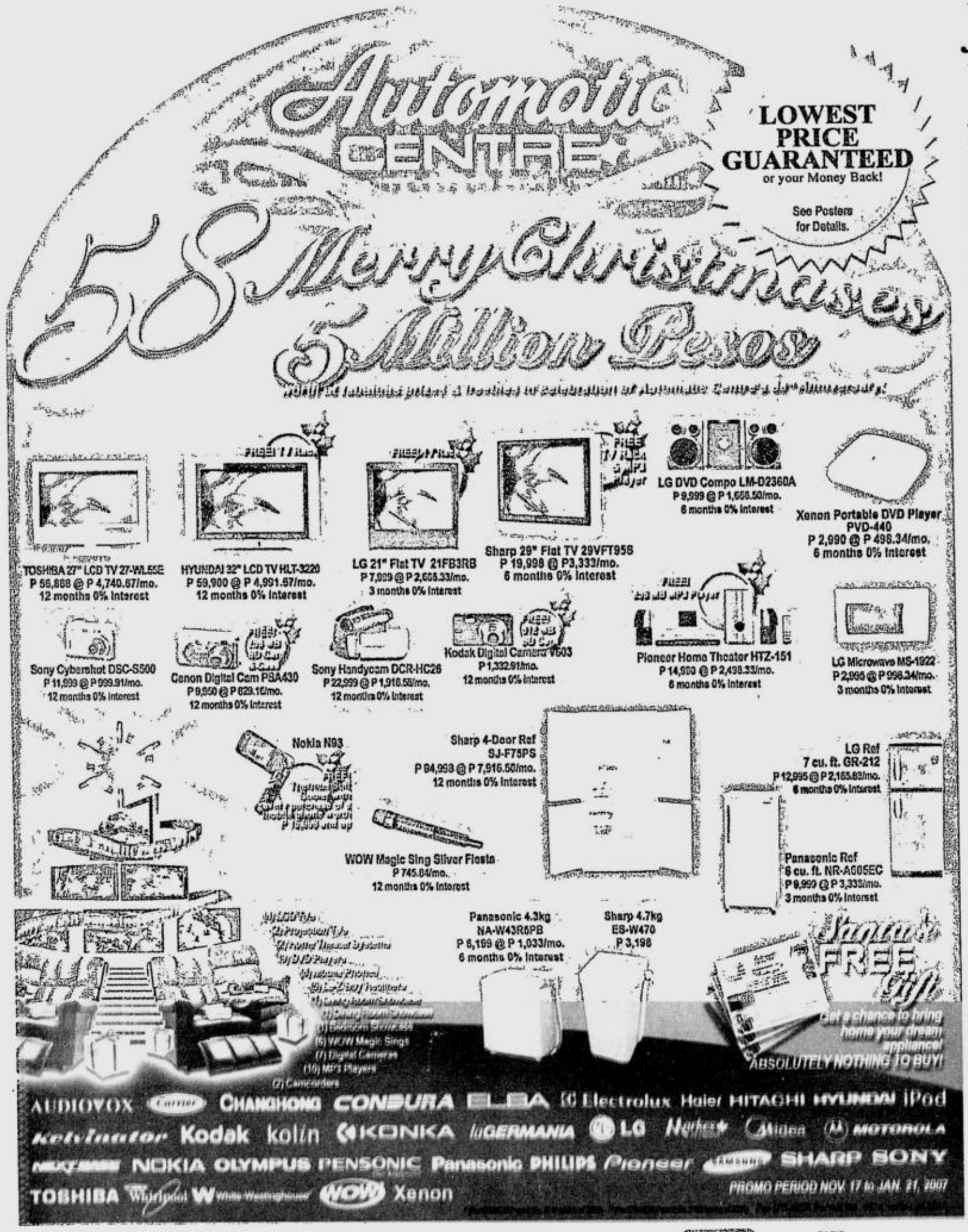
Armed with a search warrant issued by Regional Trial Court Judge Francisco Rodriguez, the CIDG team was assisted by elements from the 612nd Provincial Mobile Group and the town police, led by Supt. Khasmir Disomangcop, when they raided the house of Nazareno at about 6 a.m. yesterday in Barangay 5, Moises Padilla.

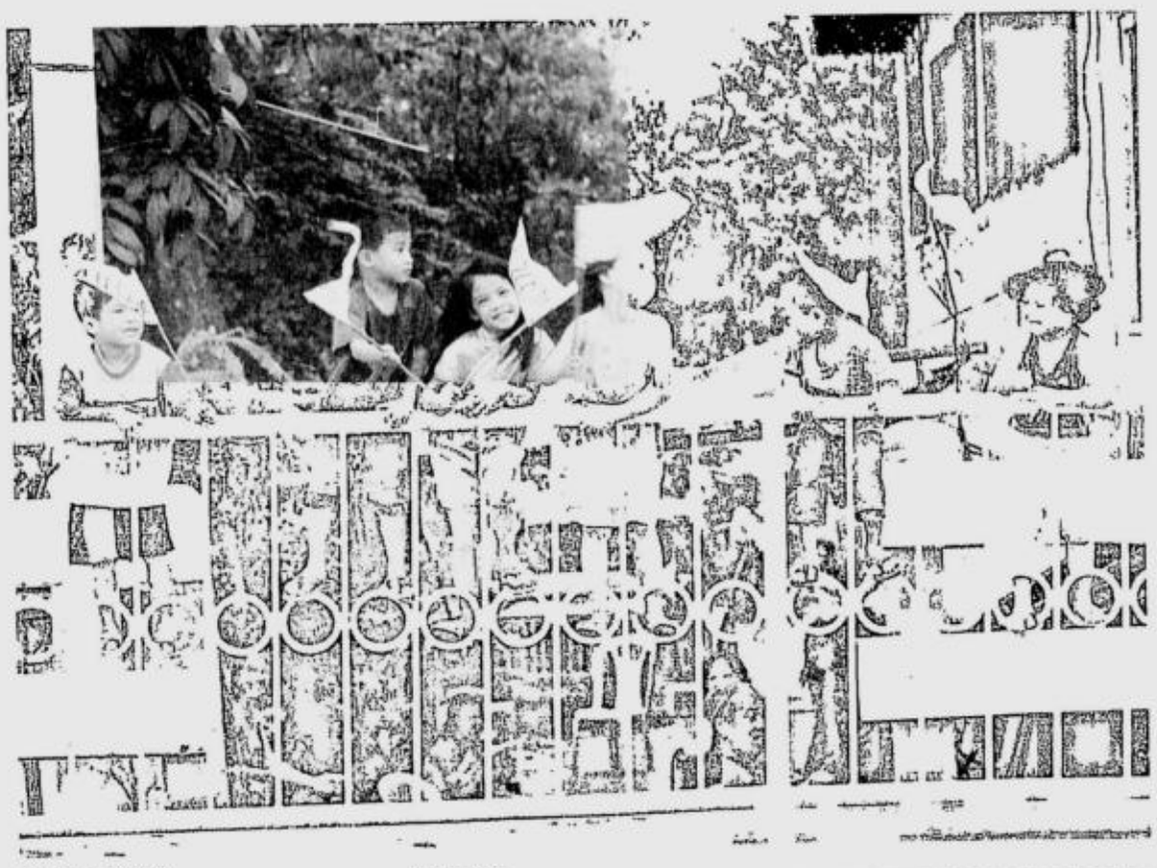
Several hours after their arrest, Nazareno and his son posted bail of P100,000 each, and were released from the CIDG lock-up cell as ordered by RTC Judge Pepito Gellada.

Disomangcop said the raid was conducted because of persistent reports about the alleged presence of a private armed group composed of ex-military men at the compound of Nazareno.

John Mark Tamaño, counsel of Nazareno, said the accusation that his client maintains a private armed group was baseless. He dared those making the accusations to substantiate their claim and identify the members of the alleged private armed group.

Seized in the raid were three .45 cal. pistols, a 9mm pistol, a 357 magnum revolver, a .22 cal. revolver, a super .38 cal. pistol, 12 gauge shotgun and hundreds of rounds of ammunition of various caliber.





Entire police force sacked over killing of vice mayor

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE ENTIRE POLICE force of Tapaz town, save for the acting police chief, was relieved in connection with the killing of Vice Mayor Victor Gardose and two others.

Senior Supt. Reynaldo Rafal, head of the Task Force Gardose, said the town's 16 policemen were replaced by members of the 605th provincial mobile group.

The town's police chief, SPO3 Gilbert Gervero, was relieved immediately after the killings on Dec. 30 and was replaced by Insp. Don Ante.

Rafal said the policemen were relieved because their familiarity and closeness with the community and town officials could affect the investigation of the case.

He said the move was also needed to gain the trust of residents. Rafal said the policemen were also relieved as a punishment for failing to prevent the killings.

Investigators have held for questioning PO3 Danilo Gelilang, a member of the Tapaz police force assigned as a bodyguard of Mayor Romualdo Exmundo, in connection with the killings.

They have also tagged Noel Fuentespina, the driver of the mayor's cousin, provincial board member Ronald Exmundo, as one of the two gunmen.

Three witnesses have identified Fuentespina, 28, as one of the gunmen whose bonnet was taken off after he grappled for a gun with the vice mayor's bodyguard, Anthony Gequillo, before the bodyguard was also killed.

Mayor Exmundo, who is in his third and final term in office, earlier said that he will support his cousin in running for mayor against Gardose.

Gardose, Caridad village chief Leonardo Gimeno Sr. and Gequillo were shot dead in Barangay Taft in Tapaz as they were about to attend the coronation of the beauty queen of the annual barangay religious fiesta.

Two bonnet-wearing gunmen, armed with cal. .45 pistols, fired at the victims. A third suspect drove the motorcycle that was used as a getaway vehicle.

SIDELINES REM ZAMORA

Children living in the Mabolo Complex, Cebu City wave their hand-made flags as the official convoy of Asean heads of states pass by. The children said their parents made the flags for them. Schoolchildren are on a break after local authorities declared the duration of the summit as a holiday.

Classes in N. Samar stopped due to floods

By Joey A. Gabieta and Jani Arnaiz
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—CLASSES IN A NUMBER OF public schools in Northern Samar had been suspended because school buildings have been damaged or were submerged in water due to flooding brought by two weeks of continuous rain.

At least 5,000 students across Samar were prevented from going to school.

About 200 people in Southern Leyte are still in evacuation centers because of the floods.

Thelma Quilatag, Northern Samar's provincial schools superintendent, said most of the flooded schools have resumed classes this week but not in the town of Mondragon.

She said buildings of the Nenita National High School and the Nenita Elementary School, less than a kilometer from the town proper of Mondragon, suffered heavy damages due to the floods.

"One building consisting of three classrooms of the Nenita Elementary School collapsed due to the floods," Quilatag told the INQUIRER.

She said in the case of the Nenita National High School, several of its rooms were covered with "about one foot mud."

The secondary school has 265 students while its elementary counterpart has 300 pupils. A still undetermined number of textbooks was also destroyed in these two schools, Quilatag added.

Gov. Raul Daza earlier placed six out of Northern Samar's 24 towns—Mondragon, San Roque, Silvino Lobos, Catubig, Pambujan and Catarman—in a state of calamity due to floods that displaced over 12,000 families and killed 12 people.

In Southern Leyte, 36 families from San Francisco town on Panaon Island are still in evacuation centers as their homes remain flooded.

In Barangay Tambis Uno, across the buried Guinsaugon Village, 280 residents went back to their homes a day after they were evacuated to the municipal building. They were evacuated when the Tambis River overflowed.

The Guinsaugon memorial cross erected near the riverbank was washed away by the flood.

Baguio earns P9B out of tourism

BAGUIO CITY—FOR EARNING P9 BILLION IN 2005, tourism officials are optimistic that they will surpass this as they await the final report on tourist arrivals in the region for 2006.

Purificacion Molintas, director of the Department of Tourism in Cordillera, said accessibility, improved infrastructure and road networks drew more tourists to Baguio and nearby provinces such as Mt. Province and Ifugao last year.

Molintas said in a forum here on Wednesday that the improvement of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) had made traveling easier for tourists who wanted to take their vacation in the Cordillera.

In the 1970s, Baguio and other destinations in Benguet and Mt. Province had enjoyed an upsurge of tourist arrivals because of good weather conditions.

But in the 1980s, the arrivals dwindled when the road conditions of Halsema Highway deteriorated, said Molintas.

The promotion of the North Philippines with the rehabilitation of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) had also enticed tourists to travel to the North, said Molintas.

She said the improvement of the first phase of Halsema Highway, which connects Baguio to Benguet and Mt. Province, boosted the tourism industry in those provinces.

From January to December in 2005, the DOT-Cordillera recorded 637,967 foreign and domestic tourist arrivals in Baguio City.

From January to September 2006, the city received 636,967 tourists.

Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

▷ Refund for Meralco services with terminated contracts

If you are a Meralco customer whose service contract was terminated between February 1994 and May 2003 and have not availed of the Refund (as ordered by the Supreme Court in GR Nos. 141314 and 141369, dated November 15, 2002), please call the Meralco Refund Hotline 632-8888. Give your Service I.D. Number for record verification, and if you are qualified, our Customer Assistance Representatives will tell you how you can claim your refund.

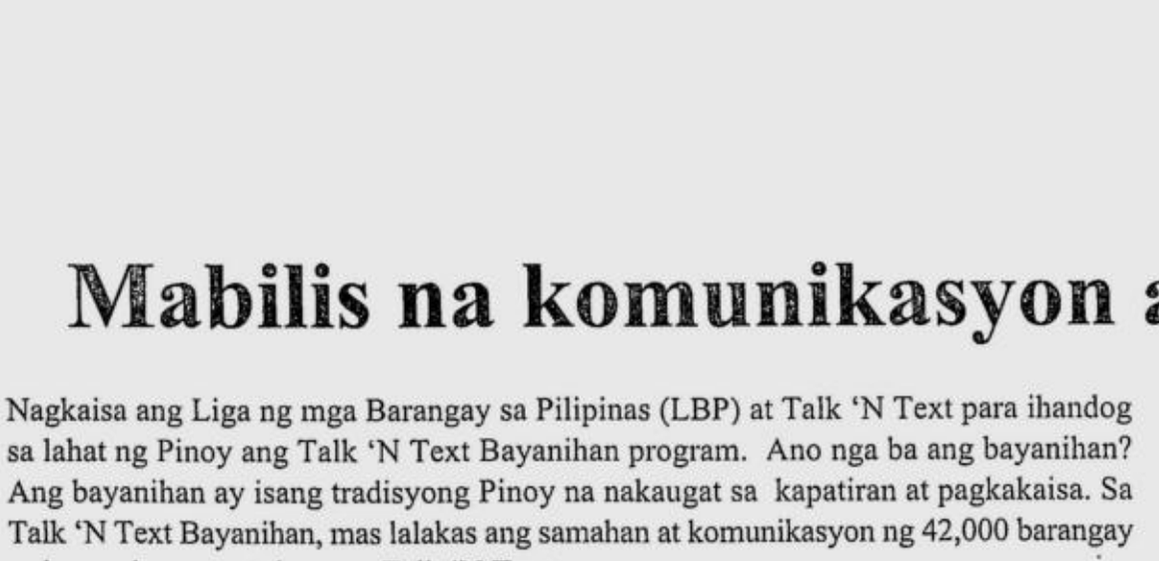
MERALCO

may liwanag ang buhay

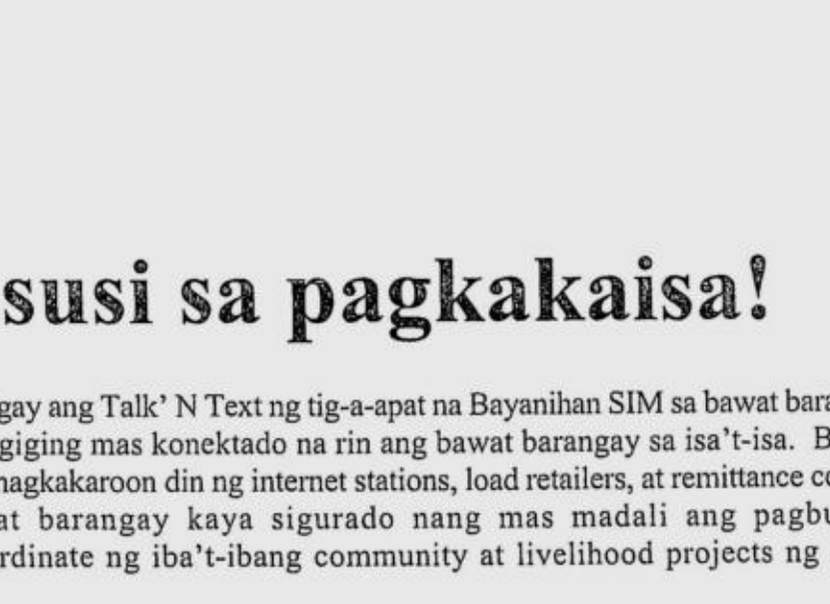
Mabilis na komunikasyon ang susi sa pagkakaisa!

Nagkaisa ang Liga ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas (LBP) at Talk 'N Text para ihandog sa lahat ng Pinoy ang Talk 'N Text Bayanihan program. Ano nga ba ang bayanihan? Ang bayanihan ay isang tradisyong Pinoy na nakaugat sa kapatiran at pagkakaisa. Sa Talk 'N Text Bayanihan, mas lalakas ang samahan at komunikasyon ng 42,000 barangay sa buong bansa sa tulong ng Talk 'N Text.

Mamimigay ang Talk' N Text ng tig-a-apat na Bayanihan SIM sa bawat barangay kaya magiging mas konektado na rin ang bawat barangay sa isa't-isa. Bukod pa rito, magkakaroon din ng internet stations, load retailers, at remittance centers sa bawat barangay kaya sigurado nang mas madali ang pagbuo at pag-coordinate ng iba't-ibang community at livelihood projects ng LBP.



Standing L-R : Margarita Atienza (Director, ONL Consultants), Ma. Rosalia Lagdameo (Managing Director, ONL Consultants), Evelyn Rodriguez (Palawan Chapter President, LNB), James Albert Bernas (Wireless Consumer Solutions Dept. Head, SMART Comm), Marivic Cruz (Paranaque Chapter President, LNB), Jose Concepcion (Brgy. Forbes, Makati Chapter President), Armando Villamayor (Rizal Chapter President, LNB), Ryan Jusi (Wireless Consumer Solutions Planning and Operations Supervisor, SMART Comm) Seated L-R: Mon Isberto (Public Affairs Head, SMART Comm), Perry Bayani (Sales & Business Development Head, SMART Comm), Bung Mojica (OSM Head, SMART Comm) James Marty Lim (National President, LNB) Eduardo Tiongson (Executive Director, LNB), Norberto Ong (President, ONL Consultants)



TALK 'N TEXT Gumagaan ang Life!

Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, ang sagot ay Bayanihan!

Powered by SMART

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Text us your feedback: inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

DPWH takes down giant billboards in renewed drive vs hazardous ads

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS and Highways resumed yesterday the dismantling of billboards along Edsa, starting with three outdoor advertisements owned by a firm that sought to prevent, through the courts, the removal of the structures.

Though it was announced Thursday that the removal of illegal or hazardous billboards would be suspended because Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. had to go to Cebu for the Asean summit, Assistant Secretary Rafael Yabut said the operations team was not informed of the cancellation.

"We decided to push through with it because our men were at the site already," Yabut said in a phone interview.

DPWH operatives started dismantling the steel frames of three billboards owned by DDBS Advertising Unlimited, according to District Engineer Reynaldo Tagudando.

He said the billboards were located at the Social Security System Compound at the corner of East Avenue, at the DPWH compound, and near the Landbank office, all along Edsa.

The district engineer said it would take days, if not weeks, before the billboards were completely dismantled because of their sizes.

DDBS Advertising Unlimited got earlier temporary restraining orders from a Quezon City Regional Trial Court and the Court of Appeals that suspended the dismantling of the billboard at the SSS compound.

The company said it had the proper permits and was not accorded due process when the DPWH decided to tear down the billboard.

But the appeals court denied later the firm's petition for an injunction against the removal of the billboards.

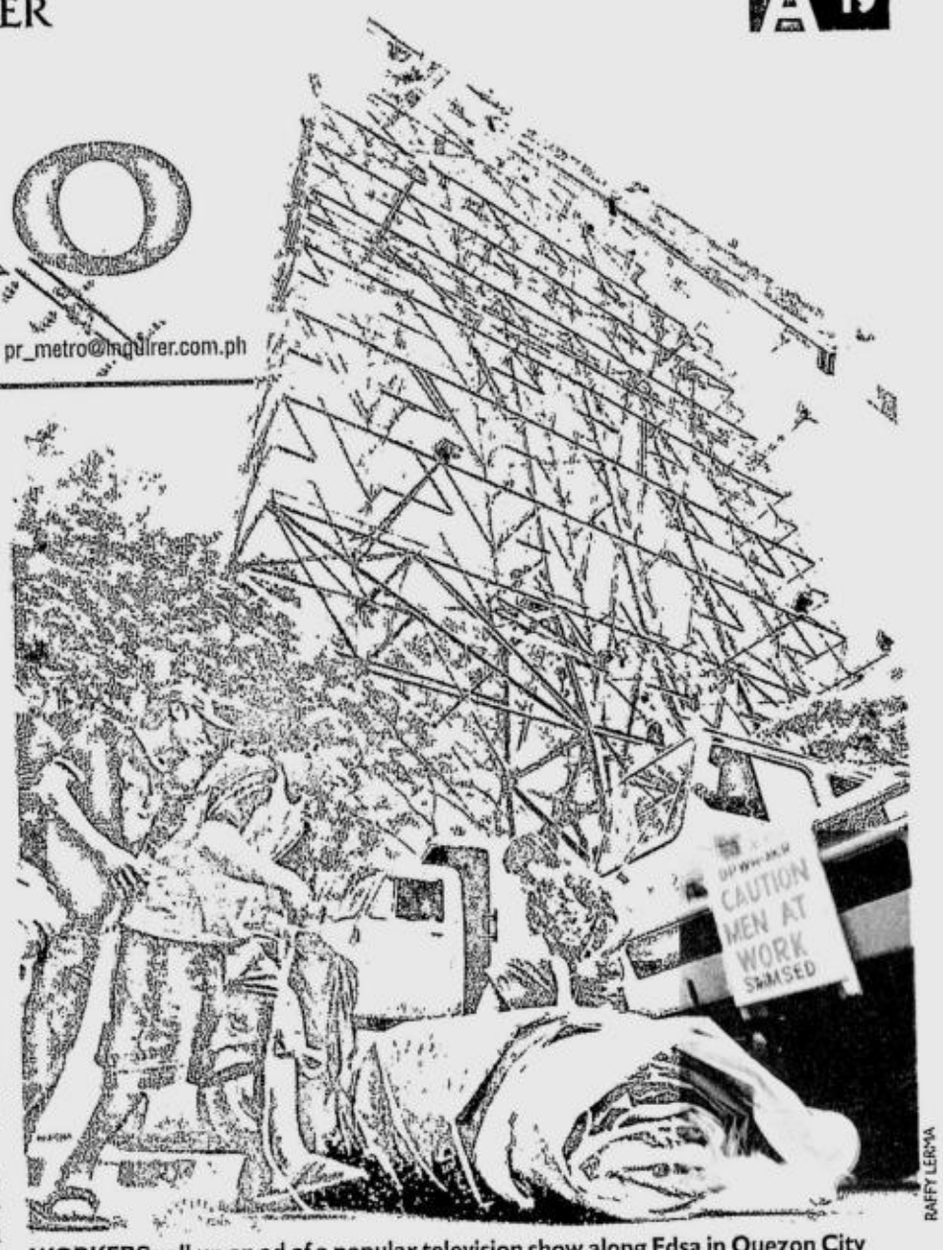
The appeals court said the DPWH showed the DDBS billboard did not have a permit and was a road hazard.

The dismantling of illegal and hazardous billboards began shortly after Typhoon "Milenyo" hit the country in late September.

After several billboards collapsed and one person died, President Macapagal-Arroyo directed the DPWH to dismantle billboards that violated the National Building Code and other regulations, and were threats to public safety.

But even before supertyphoons like Milenyo brought down giant billboards mainly in Metro Manila, the DPWH had already drafted a circular prohibiting the putting up of huge ads along national highways like Edsa.

The draft circular specified that no billboard should be placed within a 100-meter radius from the center of national roads and transmission lines. New rules on billboards are now being readied for inclusion in the building code.



RAFFY LERMA

WORKERS roll up an ad of a popular television show along Edsa in Quezon City during the first day of the Department of Public Works and Highway's campaign to dismantle billboards that violate the building code or are threats to public safety.

Task force after Metro's 200,000 'flying' voters

'New machines make identification easier'

By Jerome Aning

THE HEAD OF THE COMMISSION ON Elections' (Comelec) newly created task force against "flying" voters vowed to go after double and multiple registrants, including about 200,000 reported to be ready to vote in Metro Manila.

Following a dialogue between Comelec officials and nongovernment organizations in Manila convened by the Consortium on Electoral Reforms, Ferdinand Rafanan told reporters that there were about 94,000 flying voters in Metro Manila in 2004. "We expect that number to have doubled by now," he added.

After the 2004 polls, about 110,000 flying voters, mostly from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, were identified by Comelec. The nearly 18,000 who were charged in court face jail terms of up to two years and permanent disqualification from voting and running in elections.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. admitted in an earlier interview that the agency identified about 200 voters, mostly in the eastern part of metropolis, who registered in one or more precincts in two to three days.

"They will have a difficult time explaining when we file charges against them," he said. Abalos said the Comelec could now catch flying voters because it was using machines that recorded a registrant's photo and biometric data.

Asked why some people registered more than once, Abalos said: "I would say they were encouraged by politicians to do it or they want to make money from politicians for the May elections."

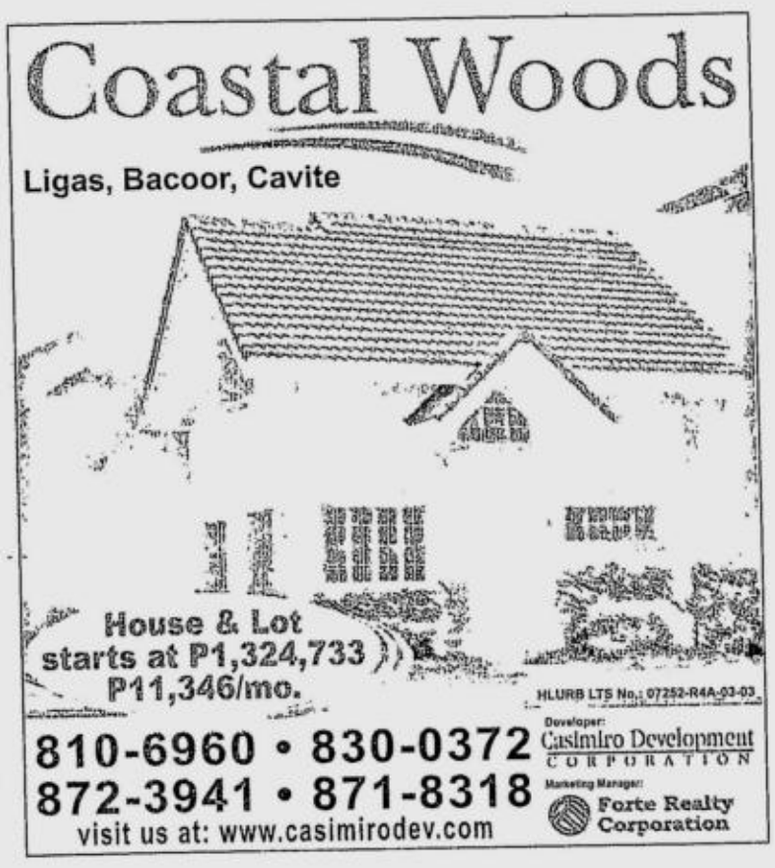
But Comelec officials said they would ensure that people in demolished residential areas along the railways in Metro Manila, Calabarzon and Central Luzon would be able to vote even though they had been resettled elsewhere.

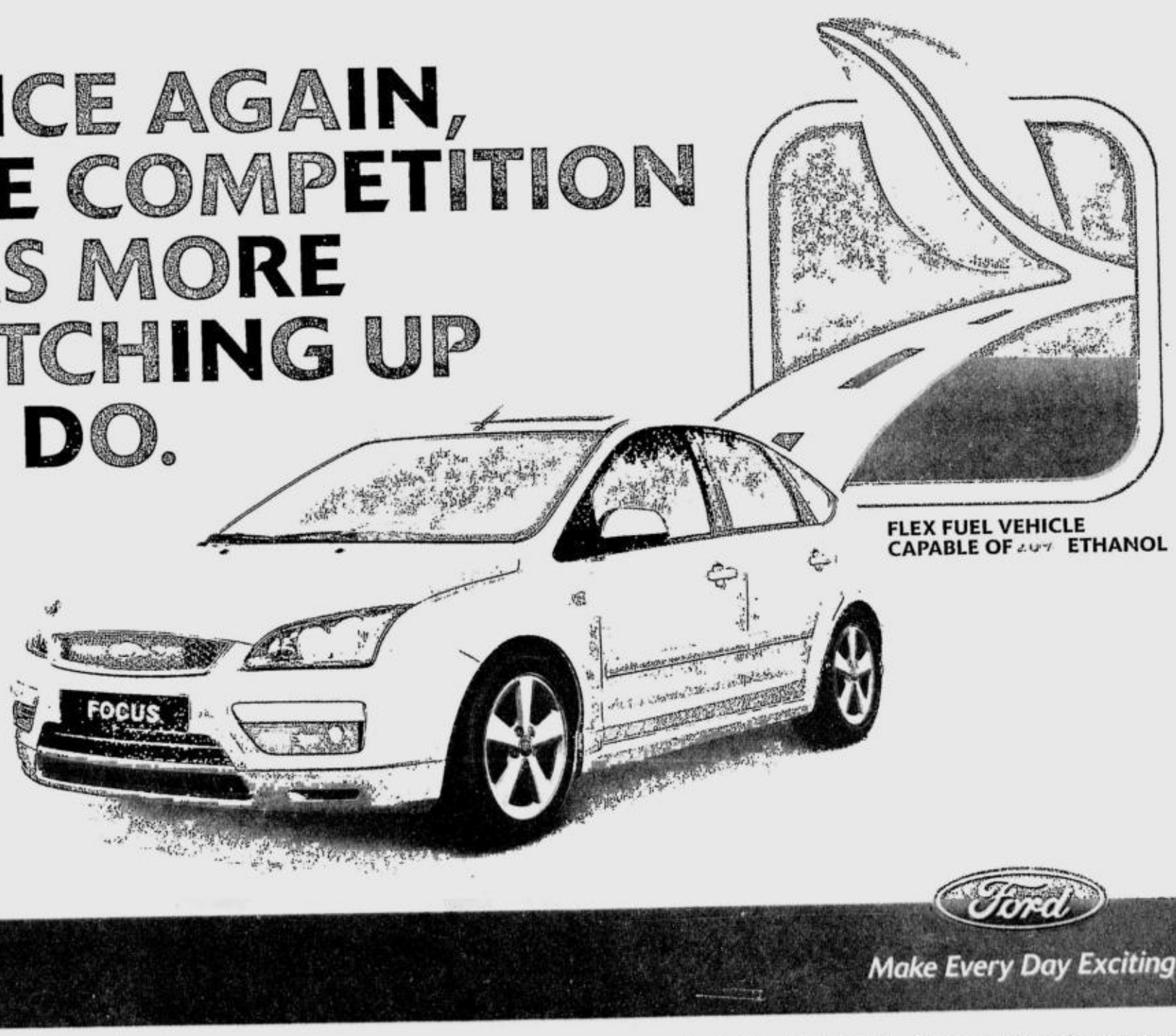
Rafanan said the task force had no staff yet. He also said he would accept his latest designation, as further proof that "I never disobeyed any order."

Before his assignment to the task force, Rafanan was placed on "floating" status for alleged insubordination, and had protested his relief as Comelec director for the National Capital Region.

Rafanan has a pending motion for reconsideration on his transfer, which resulted from his actions during the verification of signatures for the aborted people's initiative to amend the Constitution launched by the Sigaw ng Bayan and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.

He said he had not violated any Comelec resolution or written policy when he warned Metro Manila election officers against verifying the signatures. He was relieved of his post last month, after having worked at the Comelec-NCR since 2000.





With the signing of the Bio-Fuels Act, the Ford Focus shines as the country's first and only Flex Fuel Vehicle. Capable of running on pure gasoline or a blend of up to 20% ethanol, the Focus is the pioneer when it comes to caring for the environment. While other vehicles are still getting ready to be ethanol capable, this car is clearly ready for the future.

Look for this logo on the Ford Focus, a Flex Fuel Vehicle capable of 20% ethanol.

There won't be any probe of AFP irregularities

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

DESPITE THE INQUIRER EXPOSÉ ON CORruption in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), there won't be an investigation.

Why? Because the AFP is one big brotherhood. Military officers are expected to cover up for the sins of fellow officers.

Look what happened to the graft case against Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, who was tried and found guilty of corruption while he was the military's procurement officer. He was sentenced to only two years in prison for amassing huge wealth.

Besides, according to my sources within the military establishment, President Macapagal-Arroyo, the AFP commander in chief, is afraid of her generals.

* * *

There is a perception among lower-ranking officers—lieutenants, captains, majors and lieutenant colonels—that the President pays off the generals so they will not lead a revolt against her.

If that perception is accurate, then the President is mistaken.

My sources in the military say that her predecessor, President "Erap" Estrada, was also very generous with his generals through the presidential contingency or intelligence fund. But they revolted against him anyway and took part in the Edsa II revolt.

* * *

The government points to the Abu Sayyaf as the group behind the bombing in General Santos City that claimed eight lives and injured more than 30 persons.

The government is not pointing an accusing finger at the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) because it doesn't want to compromise the peace talks with the Moro secessionist group.

But the MILF has been protecting the Abu Sayyaf. In fact, the Abu Sayyaf is a special operations group (read: dirty tricks department) of the MILF.

The government should stop deceiving the public about the activities of the MILF. The MILF and the Abu Sayyaf are one.

* * *

Tons of "hot" pork from China seized by the Bureau of Customs were spirited out from customs bonded warehouses and ended up in Pampanga, the President's home province.

The contaminated meat (China has a foot-and-mouth disease epidemic) was imported by Golden Arch, a fictitious company. Its broker was SM Strada.

The question is, how did a big quantity of the illegal cargo, declared as mackerel, get past the customs guards?

My customs sources say somebody big in Pampanga made representations with customs officials for the release of the illegal meat.

Trader shot dead in front of Muntinlupa City cockpit

By Julie M. Aurelio

A BATANGAS BUSINESSMAN never stood a chance as two motorcycle-riding men gunned him down Thursday afternoon in Tunasan, Muntinlupa City.

Nonilon Alcantara, 41, a native of Tanauan City, Batangas, was shot twice in the nape as he walked toward his vehicle parked near a cockfighting arena in front of the Muntinlupa City Coliseum.

Just visiting

Alcantara was a dealer of fighting cocks who usually stayed in Bayanan, Muntinlupa whenever he was in town.

He had just stepped out of the cockfighting arena at around 3 p.m. when two unidentified men on a motorcycle shot him from the back.

The armed men were on board a black Honda model, with plate number ZE 1600.

Shot in nape

"It seems that the men followed him (Alcantara) as he was walking toward his vehicle. Then they shot him in the nape," case investigator PO3 Jun Reyes of the Muntinlupa Criminal Investigation Division told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Witness

Reyes added that a young witness said the two men were wearing helmets.

They also had slightly large bellies and sported crew cuts.

Alcantara was walking towards his red Tamaraw FX when the incident happened.

Recovered

Reyes said they recovered the motorcycle an hour later at a Shell gasoline station in front of Sto. Niño Village in Tunasan.

Police recovered two .45 caliber shells from the crime scene.

Reyes added they were still investigating possible motives for the businessman's death.

Alcantara's body was later brought to the Escudero Funeral Homes in San Pedro, Laguna.

METROBRIEFS

Game den owners charged

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) has filed charges against the owners of an alleged gambling den disguised as an amusement center in Quezon City which the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) raided last year. Facing charges of illegal gambling are Jung Jung Pio and Seo Dong Sik of Korea, and Concepcion Pabalan, May S. Rivera and Hazel Diaz, alleged operators of Dolphin Story Amusement Center on Tomas Morato Avenue. After a series of surveillance operations by the NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division, the agency raided the gaming center last Dec. 11. Pagcor had requested the NBI to investigate the gaming center after Pagcor officials certified that Dolphin was not authorized to operate a gambling facility. During the raid, NBI agents seized high tech slot machines estimated to be worth over P21 million. The owners will be charged for violating Section 1 of Presidential Decree 1603, or the illegal gambling decree, in relation to Section 3 of Republic Act No. 9267, which sets the penalties for illegal numbers games.

Miko Morelos

4 QC cops face raps

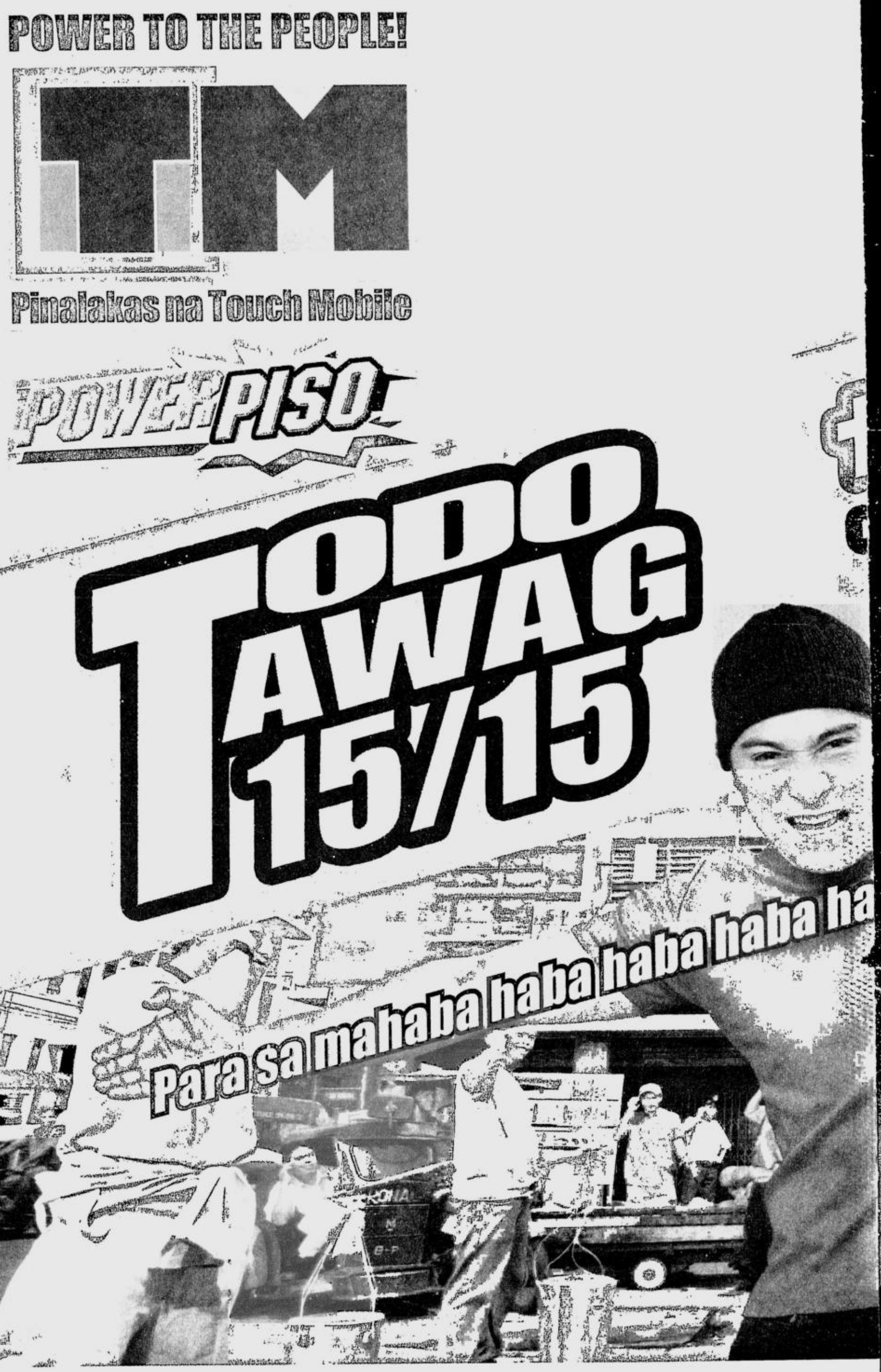
FOUR Quezon City policemen who allegedly manhandled a businessman whom they claimed to be responsible for the arrest of their colleague in October last year are now facing charges filed against them by the National Bureau of Investigation. The suspects were identified as SPO2 Felix Baxinela, PO1s Bismark Gaviola and Johnny Manilum, and PO3 Marlon Colcto, of Police Community Precinct 4, Quezon City Police District. Special Investigator 3 Federico Criste said the four were charged for violating Article 266 of the Revised Penal Code (slight physical injuries and maltreatment), Article 294 (robbery with violence against or intimidation of persons) in relation to Article 295 (robbery with physical injuries committed by a band with the use of firearm on street or road). Apart from the police officers, also charged with the same offenses were Jonathan de Leon and two others known only by their aliases Dodong Tartaro and Jojo, allegedly police assets, Criste said. The case stemmed from the complaint of businessman Roderick Laurente, 36, a car wash shop owner from Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City. Laurente accosted Tartaro regarding the latter's alleged illegal drug peddling activities in the area, ending in a fist fight. In the middle of the fight, the police officials, on board a mobile patrol car, arrived in the area and allegedly helped Tartaro in mauling the victim. The suspects also took his cellular phone and wallet containing P30,000, Laurente said.

Tina G. Santos

Jail guard survives ambush

A QUICK-THINKING jail guard saved himself and his family from four armed men who ambushed the group as they were on their way to their Caloocan City home at midnight yesterday. JO1 Ronimar R. Masibang, of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and assigned in Quezon City, was seriously wounded while his wife and 5-year-old son were unharmed when the four suspects waylaid them along Carnation and Carolina Streets, Capitol Parkhomes, Camarin. Armed with handguns, the men blocked the motorcycle carrying the family, then fired at Masibang, hitting him on the right side of his body. Police said Masibang was able to fire at the suspects who promptly left the scene. Investigators said they still have yet to determine the motive of the ambush.

Nancy C. Carvajal



In Europe, Germany's Merkel shines as Blair and Chirac wane

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel AFP

BERLIN—WHEN ANGELA MERKEL WAS SWORN in 14 months ago as Germany's chancellor, the first woman to hold the post, she seemed less a phenomenon than a fluke—squeaking into office amid predictions that her government would be hobbled by internal problems and might soon collapse.

Now, with Britain and France both in political flux and with Merkel having forged a surprisingly warm relationship with President Bush, the 52-year-old Merkel has emerged as the leading political actor in Europe—not to mention the go-to person in Europe for Washington.

It is no accident that when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wraps up a tour of the Middle East next week, her first stop will be Berlin, where she will brief Merkel on efforts to revive the peace efforts in that region.

On a visit to Washington last week, Merkel won a pledge from Bush to focus more on the so-called quartet—the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations—to promote peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

"This enables the European Union, as a whole, to take on responsibility, and we want to take on responsibility for the Middle East process," Merkel said in an interview here Thursday.

Merkel's foray into the Middle East is one of several high-visibility initiatives by the chancellor as she assumes the rotating presidencies of the European Union and the Group of 8 industrial nations.

At the top of Merkel's agenda, analysts here say, is reinvigorating the Atlantic alliance. Her first foreign trip after assuming the dual presidencies was to the White House, where she proposed creating a trans-Atlantic economic zone and pressed Bush on climate-change policies.

Merkel is receiving a respectful hearing in Washington in part because she is the only leader of a big-three European nation likely to be around at the end of this year. Tony Blair of Britain and Jacques Chirac of France are in the waning months of their lengthy tenures.

"She's the big player in Europe right now," said Kurt Volker, the Bush administration's principal deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs.

The Bush administration, Volker said, viewed Merkel as the "anchor point" for its dealings with the European Union on a host of issues, from constraining Iran's nuclear ambitions to responding to Russia's recent showdown with Belarus over natural gas and oil shipments.

In general, Merkel deflected questions about her enhanced status. But she left no doubt she would push her ideas aggressively.

With Germany growing at its fastest clip in six years, Merkel's government looks secure. The question, analysts here say, is whether she will achieve endurance on the global stage. Merkel professes not to be worried. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

Emergency rule in Bangladesh

DHAKA—Running battles with flying rocks and tear gas came to a halt in Bangladesh's capital Friday as police and soldiers enforced a state of emergency greeted by many as a welcome end to months of chaos. "Today, after a long time, I can walk freely and without tension in the city. Calm has come everywhere," Mahmudul Islam Apu, a student, told AFP as he walked past the heavily-fortified presidential palace in Dhaka. Bangladesh President Iajuddin Ahmed declared the state of emergency and a night-time curfew late Thursday in a bid to put an end to months of political violence. He also buckled to opposition demands he quit as the head of an interim government responsible for organizing general elections, and postponed plans to hold the polls this month regardless of an opposition boycott. Many residents of the crammed capital welcomed the president's decision, seen as being the only option to save the impoverished country from yet more strikes, protests, blockades and street battles. *AFP*

Fossil skull confirms time of human migration

FROM a new analysis of a human skull discovered in South Africa more than 50 years ago, scientists say they have obtained the first fossil evidence establishing the relatively recent time for the dispersal of modern Homo sapiens out of Africa. The migrants appeared to have arrived at their new homes in Asia and Europe with the distinct and unmodified heads of Africans. An international team of researchers reported Thursday that the age of the South African skull, which they dated at about 36,000 years old, coincided with the age of and closely resembled the skulls of humans who were then living in Europe and the far eastern parts of Asia and even Australia. The timing, the scientists and other experts said, introduced independent evidence supporting archaeological finds and recent genetic studies showing that modern humans left sub-Saharan Africa for Eurasia between 65,000 and 25,000 years ago, probably closer to 45,000 to 35,000 years ago for Europe. Until now, however, paleontologists had been frustrated by the absence of fossils to test the hypothesis of most geneticists that the people of sub-Saharan Africa and in Eurasia at that time were one and the same—modern humans. The human fossil record in Africa from 70,000 to 15,000 years ago had been virtually blank. *NYT*

Possible bird flu outbreak in Japan

TOKYO—Japan said on Friday that it could be afflicted by its first outbreak of the lethal H5N1 bird flu strain in three years, as the disease killed an Indonesian woman and spread closer to Vietnam's largest city. An official at a Jakarta hospital said on Friday that a woman had died of bird flu and four other people were being treated for bird flu symptoms. The past week has seen a flare-up of infections, echoing past winters, the season when the virus appears to thrive. Some 750 chickens died on a farm in the Miyazaki area of southwestern Japan on Wednesday and Thursday, an outbreak that if confirmed as due to H5N1 would be the first in Japan since 2004. There were no reports of human infections. in of the virus. *Reuters*

Sixteen civilians, 13 Taliban killed in Afghan strike

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN—NATO WAR planes attacked and destroyed a key Taliban headquarters in southern Afghanistan, the British Military said Friday, as police reported 16 civilians and 13 rebels were killed.

The strike, in the province of Helmand early Thursday, also left five civilians wounded and several houses damaged, provincial police chief Mohammad Nabi Mullahkhail told AFP.

The British Military serving under the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force said it had "no indications" civilians were killed.

A "significant number" of Taliban were believed to have been killed, Major Mike Geldard, who coordinated the operation, said in a statement.

"At the moment (information) suggests all casualties were Taliban," British Military press officer Robert Mead told AFP.

News of the attack comes one day after ISAF announced its forces, working with the Afghan army, had killed up to 150 insurgents in the eastern province of Paktika, after they were tracked infiltrating from Pakistan.

The toll, which could not be independently verified, was one of the highest in weeks. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Rocket attack on US embassy in Athens

ANTIWAR PROTEST REUTERS

Alicia Casilio, dressed as an Iraqi civilian, stands silently at an anti-Iraq war protest in Boston, Jan. 11. The numbers on her face represent the estimated number of Iraqi civilians killed in the war.

ATHENS—ATTACKERS FIRED A ROCKET INTO the US embassy in Athens early Friday, damaging the building but causing no casualties, officials said.

"This is a very serious attack," US ambassador Charles Ries told reporters outside the embassy, one of the best-guarded buildings in the country.

Police said the rocket penetrated the building near the front-entrance emblem and exploded inside, damaging a toilet on the third floor. It was not immediately known who was responsible.

Several windows were smashed around the emblem on the facade and there are burn marks on the adjacent wall.

The police said it appeared the rocket was fired from the site of a demolished building opposite the embassy.

Greek police said the explosion occurred at 5:55 a.m. (0355 GMT).

In Washington, the State Department confirmed the explosion.

"There are no injuries or casualties of any kind. Police have responded. As a result, the embassy will be closed today Friday the 12th of January," State Department spokesman Kurtis Cooper said in a brief statement.

A police cordon in around the embassy, near the Athens city centre, caused massive traffic gridlock amid rush-hour traffic.

Police were only allowed access to the building at least 15 minutes after the blast as US embassy officials sought to determine what had happened, a police source said.

"The explosion sounded in the courtyard, then a fire broke out over the central entrance, where the emblem is situated," one Greek witness told private Skai radio.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility and no indication who was behind the attack.

A decade ago, the November 17 militant group fired a rocket at the embassy courtyard, a night-time attack that caused no casualties. The group has since been broken up.

US-owned banks and companies have been frequently targeted by small bomb blasts in Greece.

But this incident is the most serious since the 2002 break-up of November 17, which was blamed for several deadly attacks against foreign diplomats and military personnel, including the assassination of CIA station chief in Athens.

Police had stepped up surveillance of militant groups in recent years, particularly in the run-up to the Athens 2004 Olympics. *AFP*

US House challenges Bush on stem-cell research

WASHINGTON—IN A FIRST MAJOR CHALlenge to President George W. Bush, the Democratic-controlled US House of Representatives voted Thursday to lift his limits on federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research.

The White House said Bush would veto the legislation if it came to his desk.

The bill was approved on a 253-174 vote, short of the two-thirds majority needed to override an expected veto by Bush. The US Senate was due to vote on an identical measure in the coming weeks.

The Democrats chose the hot-button issue of stem-cell research to launch their first direct legislative assault on the Republican president since they swept to power in Congress in the November elections.

Bush, who opposes the harvesting of stem cells from discarded embryos as "antilife," has sharply limited federal financing for the process seen by advocates as vital to advanced medical research.

"The president will certainly veto the legislation if it comes to his desk because it would compel all American taxpayers to pay for research that relies on the intentional destruction of human embryos for the derivation of stem cells," said Tony Fratto, a Bush spokesperson.

"The bill passed today is seriously flawed and would undo essential ethical protections, and slow the development of new techniques that avoid bio-ethical concerns," Fratto said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi hailed Thursday's vote as a victory for the effort to find cures for a number of diseases, including diabetes and cancer. *AFP*

ARREST WARRANT FOR ISABELITA

Former Argentine President Maria Estela Martinez de Peron, known as "Isabelita," in an April 4, 1975 photo. An Argentine federal jury issued an international arrest warrant for Peron for the kidnapping and disappearance of an activist during her 1974-1976 mandate. She has lived in exile in Spain since 1981. AP

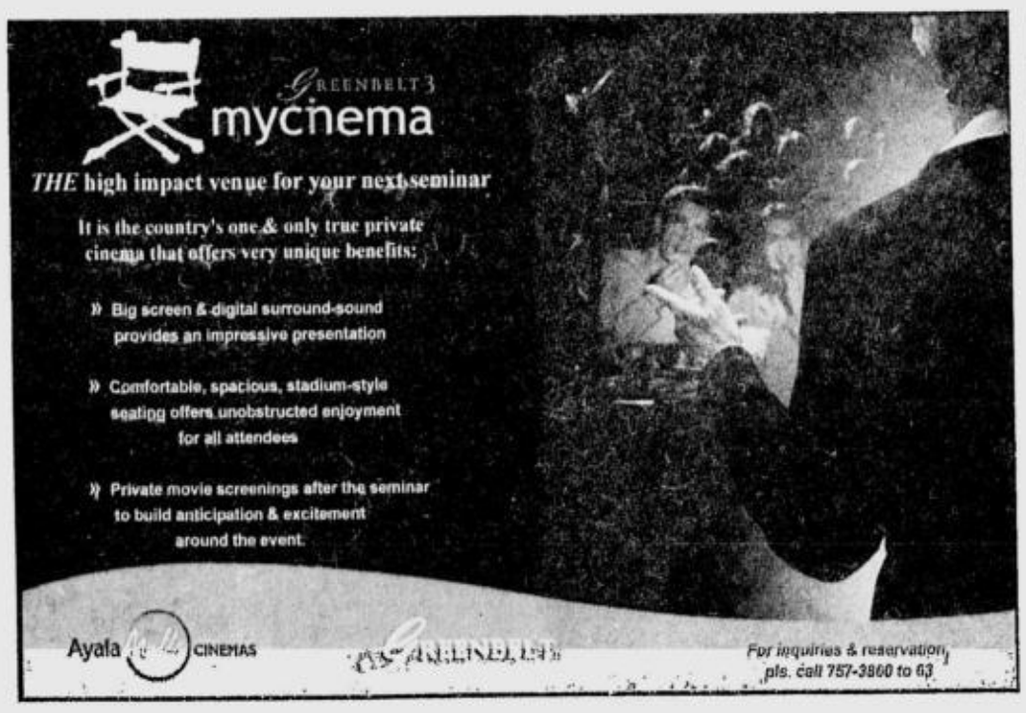
US troops raid Iranian offices in Iraq

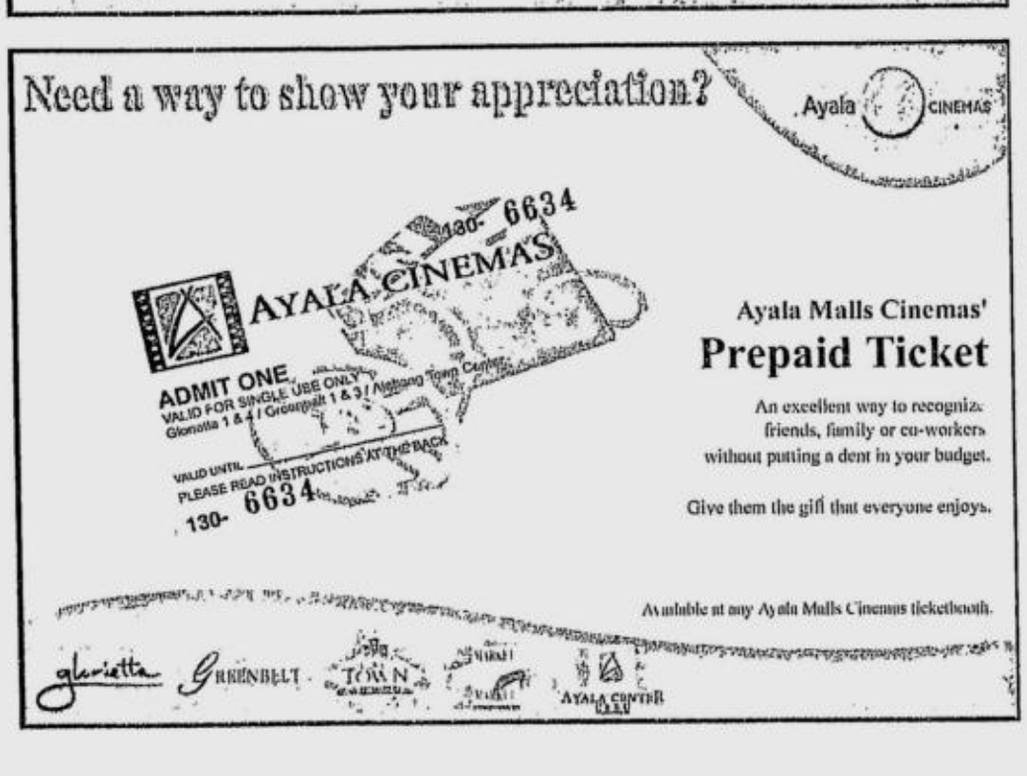
ERBIL, IRAQ—AMERICAN TROOPS BACKED by attack helicopters and armored vehicles raided an Iranian diplomatic office in the dead of night early Thursday and detained as many as six of the Iranians working inside. It was the second surprise seizure of Iranians by the American Military in Iraq in recent weeks and came a day after President Bush bluntly warned Iran to quit meddling in Iraqi affairs.

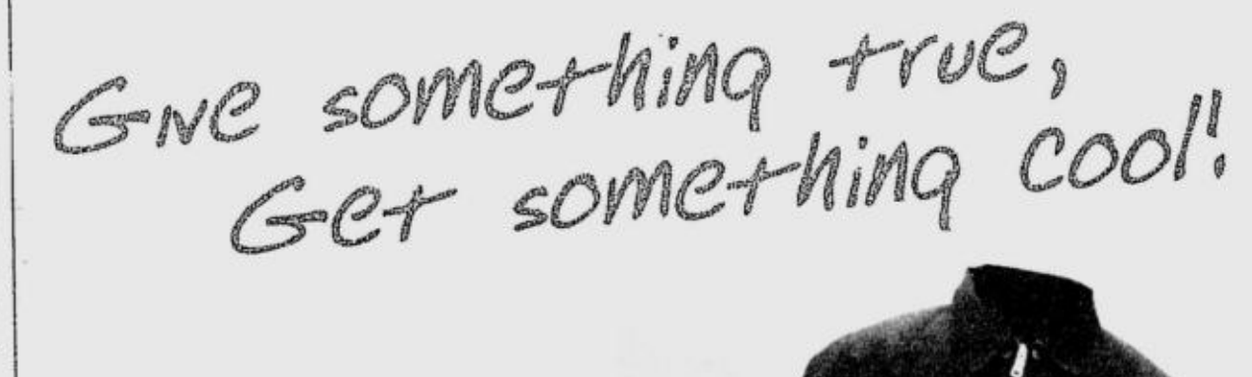
The raid provoked a tense standoff later in the day between American soldiers and about 100 Kurdish troops, who surrounded the American armored vehicles for about two hours in this northern Iraqi city.

The attack was denounced by senior Kurdish officials, who are normally America's closest allies in Iraq but regarded the action as an affront to their sovereignty in this highly tribal swath of the country. Iran's Foreign Ministry in Tehran reacted with a harsh denunciation that threatened to escalate tensions with the Bush administration.

The American Military said in a statement that it had been "conducting routine security operations in Erbil Jan. 11 and detained six individuals suspected of being closely tied to activities targeting Iraqi and Coalition Forces. One individual was released and five remain in custody." *NYT*







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SPORTS

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Text us your feedback: Inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

■ **Little men** make big plays/A25

Realtors clinch last q'final slot

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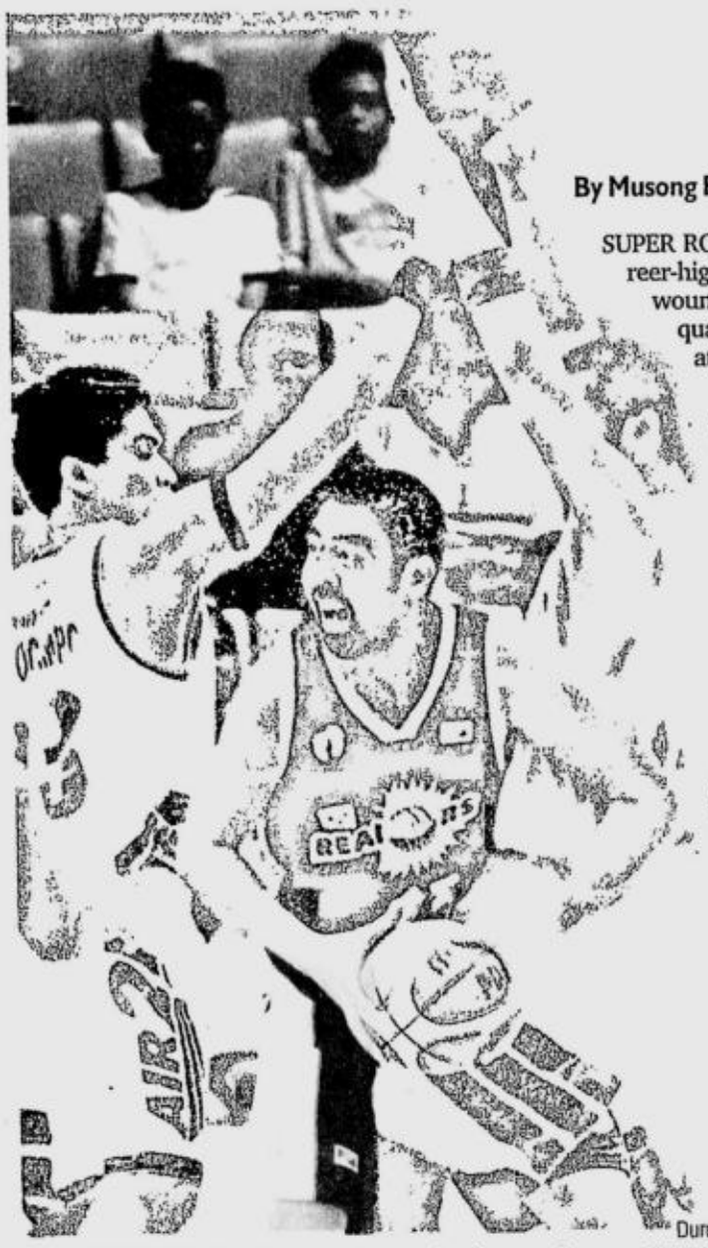

GAMES TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:05 p.m.—Red Bull vs. Sta. Lucia
6:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Talk 'N Text

By Musong R. Castillo

SUPER ROOKIE KELLY WILLIAMS SCORED SEVEN OF HIS CAreer-high 35 points in overtime last night to carry walking wounded Sta. Lucia into the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup quarterfinals after a high-wire 121-118 decision of Air21 at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The Fil-American's brilliance in extra time rescued a brilliant all-around game by the veterans in the Sta. Lucia lineup as the Realtors came back from six points down at the start of extension to earn a quarterfinal pairing with rock-solid Red Bull.

Marlou Aquino, in a performance that was nothing short of heroic, was at the forefront of the Sta. Lucia game on both ends early before fouling out—injured—with 35.4 left in in the fourth period.

Kenneth Duremdes was also instrumental, shooting 12 points before leaving the court late in the fourth quarter because of a dislocated right pinky.

Aquino, who finished with 26 points and three blocks, was also helped out of the floor by team utility after hurting his right knee in a collision with Arwind Santos in his last defensive play on the floor.

"We went through a lot," Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua said. "Tonight felt like Christmas. I didn't get to enjoy last Christmas."

Quarterfinal play starts tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum with defending champion Purefoods and Talk 'N Text playing in another best-of-five series.

Sta. Lucia actually blew a 16-point lead in the third period and a commanding 15-point advantage with 6:32 left in regulation after the Express got their running game going and forged extension at 108 after five straight charities inside the final 35.4 ticks.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 121—Williams 35, Aquino 26, Cabagnot 21, Gonzales 12, Duremdes 11, Mendoza 9, Espino 5, Calimag 2, Bughao 0, Isip 0, Omolon 0.

AIR21 118—David 25, Santos 24, Canaleta 17, Telan 17, Arboleda 16, De Ocampo 9, Billones 4, Dimaunahan 2, Bernardo 2, Se 2, Andaya 0, Sotto 0.

Quarters: 35-27, 58-54, 89-79, 108-all, 121-118.

STA. LUCIA'S Marlou Aquino tries to wigggle out of a double team put up by Air21's Ranidel de Ocampo and Irvin Sotto in yesterday's game. RYAN LIM

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FILINVEST FESTIVAL MALL - Level 2
ROBINSON'S ERMITA - Level 2
THE PODIUM - Level 3
GREENBELT 3 - Level 1
SM SOUTHMALL - Upper Groud Floor
EASTWOOD CITYWALK II - Unit A3-3B & 2F-3B
GATEWAY - Ground Floor
TUTUBAN CENTERMALL - Ground Floor
SM MALL OF ASIA - Level 2

Outlet Store:
PASEO de STA. ROSA - Ground Floor

Provincial:
AYALA CENTER CEBU - Ground Floor
ROBINSON'S CEBU - Ground Floor
ROBINSON'S BACOLOD - Ground Floor
ROBINSON'S BIG-R CAGAYAN DE ORO - Level 1
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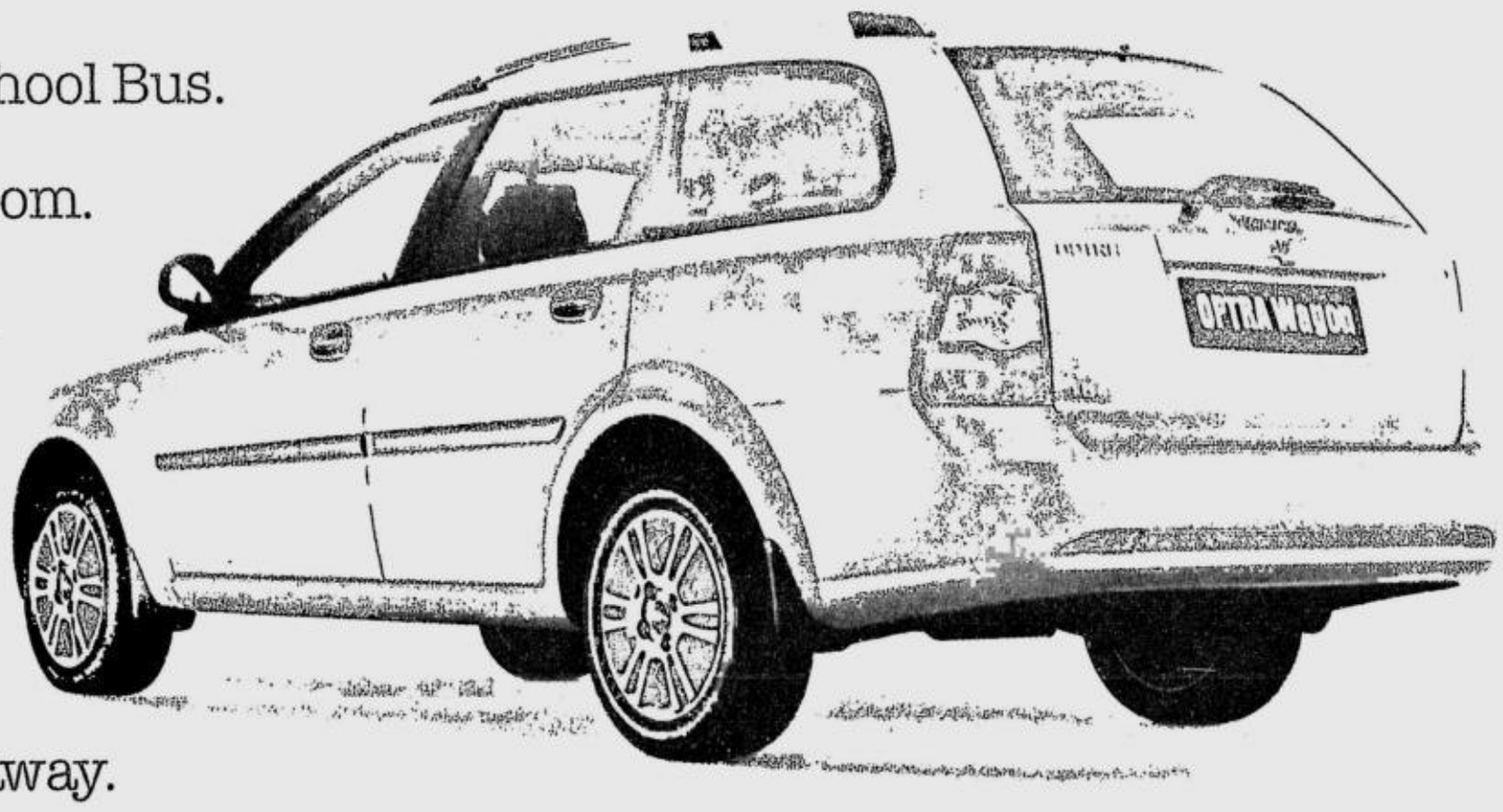

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PSC may withhold allowances of chess game-fixers

By Marlon Bernardino, *Contributor*

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION WILL CONduct a separate inquiry into the chess game-fixing scam involving some members of the national team, PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez Jr. said yesterday.

Ramirez said that while the PSC board is waiting for the formal report of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, they will make a parallel probe to decide on what course of action to take against the prime suspects in the game-fixing or "networking" controversy that has rocked the local chess community.

Grandmaster Mark Paragua and International Masters Darwin Laylo and Ronald Dableo are at the center of the scandal, according to NCFP executive director Samuel Estimo on Thursday.

"The PSC board will look into it," said Ramirez in a phone interview. "It concerns us because some of the players involved are under our care."

RAMIREZ

PICHAY

Ramirez said the agency may opt to withhold the allowances of the suspects, citing precedents they applied in cases involving other national sports associations in the past. But he stressed that it will be the PSC board which will decide on the matter.

Paragua, Laylo and Dableo, who are all competing in the ongoing Asian Chess Zonal in Vietnam, receive monthly stipends of P9,000 each from the PSC.

"The PSC may withhold their monthly allowances, just like what we did in the case of an NSA coach who was accused of sexual harassment," Ramirez said.

Ramirez said he was shocked to learn of the mess since the country's top chess players are said to be involved.

"I've heard of the game-fixing issue in chess, but I know Congressman Pichay (NCFP president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr.) is a very good legislator and disciplinarian," said Ramirez.

NCFP secretary general and Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr. echoed Ramirez's statement.

"It's the prerogative of the PSC to conduct a separate investigation since national athletes are involved," said Tolentino. "Remember, the players are only suspects. Let's wait for their (Dableo, Laylo and Paragua) return so that they can defend themselves."

The INQUIRER broke out the news of rampant game-fixing in chess last Sunday, when Pichay announced that the NCFP was investigating at least five players, including a grandmaster, for forming a network that has rigged in their favor the results of a number of tournaments last year.

Estimo said Dableo and Laylo, the country's two campaigners in the 15th Asian Games, and Paragua deliberately dropped their matches to eventual champion IM Chito Garma in last year's Tanauan City Open.

Comets try to nail 1st semis slot

MAIL AND MORE STILL FEELS VERY SOLID WHEN IT SHOOTS FOR an outright semifinal berth today against Toyota Otis in the PBL Silver Cup tournament.

"We're a young team, but we've been working hard in practice and the desire to win is always there," said Comets coach Lawrence Chongson.

Aside from vying for the incentive, the surprising league leaders will also gun for their seventh straight win at 2 p.m. at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Parañaque.

The Comet's six-game roll—the longest winning run this conference—obviously concerns Toyota Otis coach Louie Alas.

"We have to stop their transition," said Alas. "We have to put up a disciplined defense and shoot well from the outside."

Mail and More, Alas reminded his wards, kicked off its winning streak with an 88-57 rout against the Sparks last Nov. 18.

"I think that's when they started getting confident," said Alas.

But the Sparks, who tote a 5-3 card, will try to stay in the hunt for an automatic semifinal slot, the bonus given to the top two teams at the end of the classification phase.

STANDINGS	W	L
Mail N More	7	2
Hapee-PCU	6	3
Sista	6	3
Toyota Otis	5	3
Harbour	5	3
TeleTech	4	4
Pera Padala	4	5
Magnolia	2	7
Kettle Korn	0	9

GAMES TODAY (*Olivarez College Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Mail and More
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs TeleTech

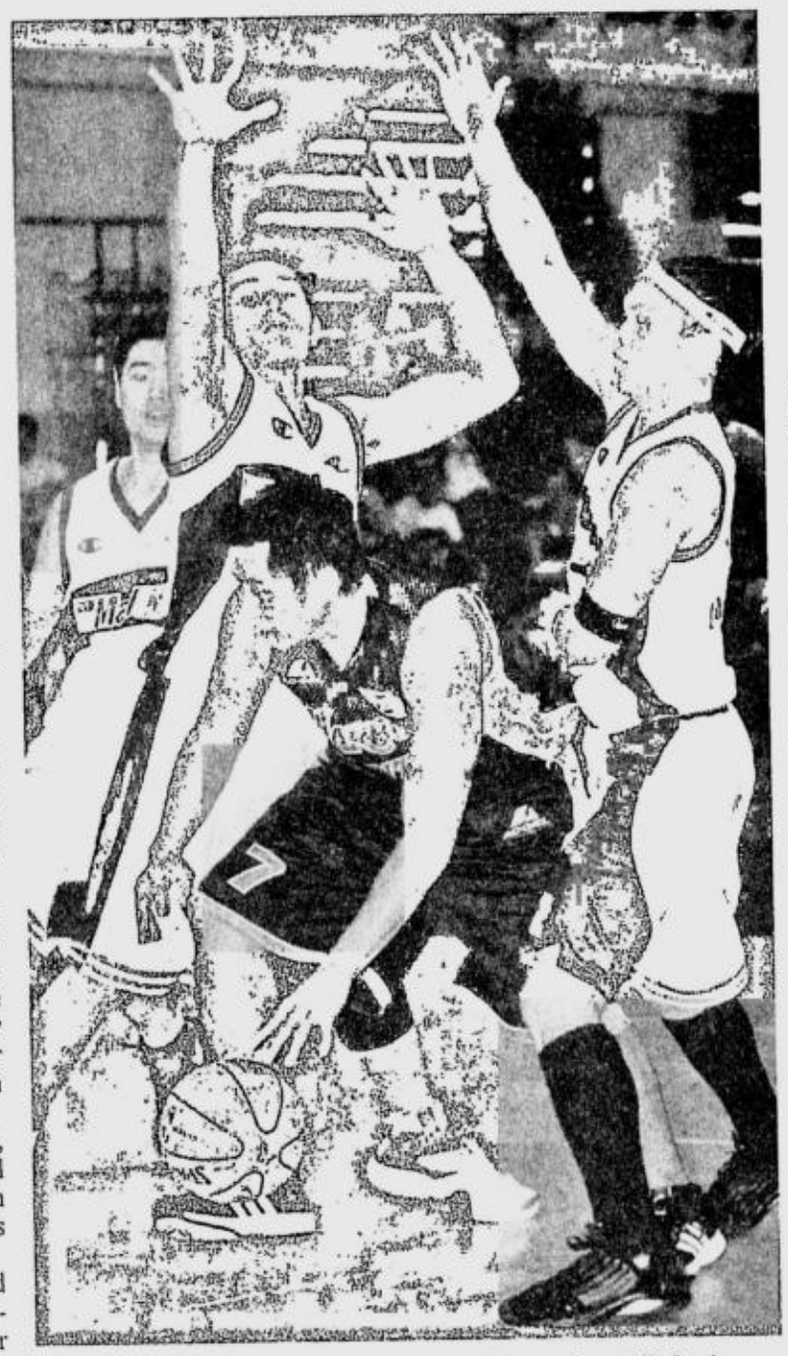
"We're not taking any team for granted," said Chongson, even after the Comets have already secured a playoff for a semifinal slot with a 7-2 slate.

Toting a 5-3 record, Harbour Centre will also try to remain in contention versus TeleTech at 4 p.m.

The Port Masters stretched their winning streak to three behind JC Intal, the fourth-quarter hero in their 75-67 triumph over Hapee-PCU last week.

Mail and More also found a savior in Ronjay Buenafe, who delivered a breakout performance by scoring 20 points in the Comets' 78-67 win over TeleTech last Tuesday.

The Comets will try to avoid figuring in a playoff match by banking on statistical leader JR Quiñahan and consistent performers Mike Bravo and Elmer Espiritu.



MAIL and More's Kenneth Coyukang, Jerby del Rosario and JR Aquino harass Harbour Centre's Marvin Ortiguerra during a recent game. RYAN LIM

If the Comets lose, a five-way tie at 7-3 may still occur at the end of the classification phase, provided that Toyota Otis, Harbour Centre, Hapee-PCU and Henkel Sista sweep their remaining assignments.

And the Sparks are hoping to forge such situation by leaning on Marvin Cruz, Patrick Cabahug and Dennis Daa.

Last Tuesday, the Sparks improved their record to 5-3 after Cabahug and Cruz drilled in a combined 33 points for an 82-66 triumph over Henkel Sista.

Jasmine W. Payo

PSA Awards: Cojuangco guest of honor anew

THE MAN AT THE helm of the Olympic movement in the country has been invited as guest of honor in the SMC-PSA Annual Awards on Jan. 18 at the Entertainment Hall of the SM Mall of Asia.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. will be the keynote speaker during the rites, set from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., where boxing icon Manny Pacquiao and seven other sports heroes will be bestowed the Athletes of the Year award.

COJUANGCO

The PSA, the country's oldest media organization, has also invited San Miguel Corp. chief operating officer and president Ramon S. Ang to deliver an inspirational speech.

Joining Cojuangco and Ang in honoring the top achievers of 2006 are other sports officials, among them Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez and commissioners Richie Garcia, Leon Montemayor, Joey Mundo and Ambrocio de Luna, Games and Amusements Board chair Eric Buhain and International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippines Frank Elizalde.

Along with Pacquiao, also to be honored as Athletes of the Year are Doha Asian Games gold medalists Joan Tipon, Violito Payla, Antonio Gabica and Rene Catalan, bowler Biboy Rivera and billiards champions Efren "Bata" Reyes and Ronnie Alcano.

The PSA Bayani ng Lahi award will also be bestowed on the 28-year-old Pacquiao for boosting Filipino pride with his back-to-back knockout wins over Mexican boxing legend Erik Morales.

Lovely karateka Gretchen Malalad and Philippine Basketball League commissioner Chino Trinidad will host the afternoon affair supported by SMC., SM Mall of Asia, PSC, POC, Philippine Basketball Association, PBL, Welcoat, Harbour Centre, Teletech, sportsman Hermie Esguerra, Air21, NBN-4 and Sports Radio.

To be honored with major awards are basketball stars James Yap (pro) and Kenneth Bono (amateur), golfers Juvic Pagunsan (pro) and Dottie Ardina (amateur), rider Santy Barnachea (cycling), jockey Jonathan B. Hernandez (horseracing) and Real Spicy (horseracing).

The PSA President's Award will be given to mountain climbers Leo Oracion, Pastor Emata and Romy Garduce for becoming the first three Filipinos to scale the peak of Mt. Everest, while Cyna Rodriguez, Mia Legaspi and Wesley So will receive the Tony Siddayao Awards.

The other medalists in the last Doha Asiad lead the personalities and entities to be given citations.

Others to be honored are Florencio Campomanes (Lifetime Achievement Award), Eugene Torre (Hall of Fame), the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines and Amateur Boxing Association (Most Outstanding NSAs) and nine sports personalities who will be bestowed Posthumous Awards.

Jittery start for Pagunsan

PAGUNSAN: Six-bogey round

JUVIC PAGUNSAN BOGEYED SIX HOLES, including four in his nine holes, and salvaged a three-over-par 75 yesterday at the start of the $5.1 million Sony Open at the Waialee Country Club in Hawaii.

Pagunsan, a former caddy at the Bacolod Golf and Country Club in Binitin, Murcia, closed his jittery round with a birdie on the ninth hole to be 12 shots off the leading pace set by Briton Luke Donald's 63.

The Asian Tour Rookie of the Year, who is playing in the leg of the US PGA Tour on sponsor's invitation, never had it going after a bogey on the 11th hole. He stood in 134th place and in danger of missing the halfway cut.

South Korean Choi Kyung-ju parlayed a solid short game and was a shot off Donald after a 64.

The 28-year-old Pagunsan is coming off a successful year in the Asian Tour with four Top 10 finishes, capped by a runner-up finish in the season-ending UBS Hong Kong Open.

Fellow Asian Tour campaigner Jarrod Lyle of Australia carded a 68 and lay in 24th spot.

Another Australian, Andrew Buckle, and Korean Charlie Wi, also two of the regular fixtures in the Asian Tour, were in joint 61st place after shooting even-par 72s. Christian Irl Tan, Inquirer Visayas

'Go made right move in quitting POC post'

By June Navarro

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday hailed the resignation of Go Teng Kok from the Olympic body as an exercise in good judgment.

"When he resigned, I think he made the right move," Cojuangco said of the controversial athletics who recently stepped down as his special assistant following a string of disagreements with POC officials.

Go was linked to efforts to reinstate the Basketball Association of the Philippines in the POC family two months ago and later got involved in a fight with fellow POC executive board members over his alleged involvement in moves to oust table tennis head Victor Valbuena.

"I only received a faxed copy of (Go's) resignation," said Cojuangco.

Go was perceived to be instrumental in Cojuangco's ascension to the POC hierarchy in 2005 after a falling out with then POC president Cito Dayrit.

Malaysians whitewash RP booters

By Cedelf P. Tupas

BANGKOK—YIELDING A GOAL AND LOSING their captain eight minutes into the match proved to be a task too hard to overcome for the Philippine team here Friday night.

Malaysia got two goals from veteran striker Hairuddin Omar to beat the Philippines, 4-0, at the start of the Asean Football Championships at the Suphachalasai Stadium.

But the Filipinos had more cause for concern other than the one-sided loss that dimmed their chances of going beyond the group stage.

Top central defender and skipper Aly Borromeo lost his balance and injured his knee while defending an early foray from Malaysia as early as the eighth minute.

The 6-foot-2 Borromeo was brought to a hospital and remains doubtful for the match against Thailand tomorrow and Myanmar on Tuesday.

"If you lose your central defender in the first 15 minutes of the match, recovering from a goal would be very difficult," coach Aris Caslib, who had earlier said that the team was eyeing a semifinal berth, said. "We have to reset our target now."

ARIEL Zerrudo carries the ball upcourt.

The Filipino booters could do little to prevent the Malaysians from breaking the ice in the 8th minute when Mohd Khyril Muhymeen's cross was headed to the bottom corner by Omar. Borromeo was injured while going after the ball on the same play and had to be replaced by Alvin Ocampo on the 13th minute.

SPORTSWATCH

Four champions emerge in SJC derby

FOUR ENTRIES RULED THE OPENING LEG OF THE SJC COCKERS CLUB 4-cock derby series on Monday at the San Juan Coliseum. The derby, backed up by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, saw the entries Labanan Sa Pasay Ika Feb. 23 of Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano, SJC 8-Cock International Jan. 22 of Rodolfo Pineda), LCC Dumbo (Louie Cua) and SJC Sebastian of Bobby Nicolas posting identical 4-0 win-loss slates. Another 4-cock event serving as second leg of the club's series and with P300,000 at stake unwraps on Wednesday. Entry fee is P11,000. Submission of entries is on Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 725-5369 or 725-6563.

'Big Event' gets going at Roligon

MORE THAN 120 FIGHTS HAVE BEEN LINED UP IN THE "BIG EVENT Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan" at Roligon Mega Cockpit which starts at 7 a.m. today. The derby, backed by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone, is hosted by Bigboy and Ronnie Lacsina and requires an entry fee of 2,200. The winners will share in the total guaranteed prize of about P500,000. The fastest-win champion will get P100,000, with the second placer pocketing P70,000 and the third placer P50,000. The next big cockfest at Roligon will be on Jan. 30, Feb. 1, 3, 5 and 7 via the P4-million RMC 17th Anniversary 6-cock derby. Host Rolly Ligon said the derby will use last year's format. Entry fee is P11,000.

52 fights up in Las Piñas 3-cocker

FIFTY-TWO FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN A SPECIAL 3-COCK WEEKEND DERBY at Las Piñas Coliseum which starts at 7 p.m. today. Host Eddie Alejandro has put up a P250,000 prize for an entry fee of P5,500. Thirty-five derby regulars from Metro Manila will slug it out for the championship, among them RC Sayawan, Baldo Perez, Angel Tenedero, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Wewe Burgos, Lito Kisapmata, Alex Braza, Larry Barbasa, Cito Zamesa, Wang Yu, Richard Ramos, Jessie Banas, Monching Ignacio, Jover Dilao, Alex Tobias and Yoyoy Dahonog. Meanwhile, LPC's Pintakasi Hackfights starts at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

Tuñacao defends OPBF title today

TUÑACAO

REIGNING ORIENTAL and Pacific Boxing Federation (OPBF) bantamweight champion Malcolm Tuñacao defends hist title today against Japan-based compatriot Rolly (Lunas) Matsushita in a 12-round encounter at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo, Japan.

Both Tuñacao, also ranked No. 4 by the World Boxing Council, and Lunas are managed by Japanese boxing managers.

At yesterday's weigh-in held at the Japan Boxing Commission office, Tuñacao and Matsushita both came in at 111.6 lb.

In the undercard, two other Filipinos see action with RP bantamweight champ Michael Domingo taking on Kazuyuki Ichikawa in a 6-round non-title duel and Michael Farenas battling another Japanese, Takuro Matsubara, in a 4-round bout.

"I cannot afford to lose as I am looking forward to challenging the WBC champion," Tuñacao said.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Pacquiao, In Jin-Chi set Cebu training

IT'S VERY LIKELY THAT BOTH FILIPINO superstar Manny Pacquiao and his leading April 28 opponent, WBC featherweight champion In Jin-chi of Korea, will be training in the Philippines for their scheduled fight in Macau, China.

The Pacquiao-Chi bout is almost a certainty after Chi's representatives informed lawyer Rudy Salud that the Korean is willing to mix it up with Pacquiao. Salud, through a journalist friend, then called up promoter Bob Arum to inform him of Chi's interest. Arum sounded upbeat on the match-up.

Early this week, celebrated trainer Freddie Roach had informed the media that Pacquiao might opt to train in the Philippines, although the announcement drew strong reactions from fans who pointed out that there would be too much distraction for the Filipino icon in the country.

Roach was quoted as saying he would not mind having Pacquiao train in the country, and would himself stay here for several weeks to train his prized ward.

The famed ALA gym in Cebu, which is owned by sportsman Antonio L. Aldeguer, has been mentioned by Roach as a possible venue for Pacquiao's training. This came after Roach was impressed with what he saw when he visited the ALA gym last month.

Roach was in Cebu for a few days upon the invitation of Cebuano promoter Rex "Wakee" Salud, a close associate of Pacquiao.

However, Roach apparently was not informed that In Jin-chi is an ALA gym rat who holds his training camp at the sprawling compound every time he has an upcoming fight.

On Dec. 11, 2005, Pacquiao crossed paths with Chi at the ALA Gym when they both came to train for their respective upcoming bouts.

Pacquiao was preparing for his rematch with Erik Morales which was to be held the following month, while Chi was preparing for his WBC defense against Japan's Takashi Koshimoto. *Salven Lagumbay, contributor*

Little men make big plays

Kidd jots triple double; Nash logs 2nd 20-assist game

CHICAGO—THE NEW JERSEY Nets overcame an 18-point deficit against Chicago for the second time in a week to defeat the Bulls, 86-83, on the back of Jason Kidd's 82nd career triple-double on Thursday.

Kidd had 23 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists for the Nets, who trailed the Bulls 55-37 at one point, and only Oscar Robertson (181) and Magic Johnson (138) have more triple-doubles than the Nets star.

A 14-point run in the fourth quarter enabled New Jersey to assume command at 81-74 on Kidd's field goal, although the home team got to within two points on Andres Nocioni's three-pointer with 16 seconds remaining.

However, Kidd closed out the scoring with two free throws with 10 seconds remaining before forcing Kirk Hinrich to lose control of the ball as his game-ending shot was blocked by Bostjan Nachbar.

Vince Carter added 18 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for the Atlantic Division-leading Nets.

Nocioni had 28 points and Ben Gordon 23 for Chicago.

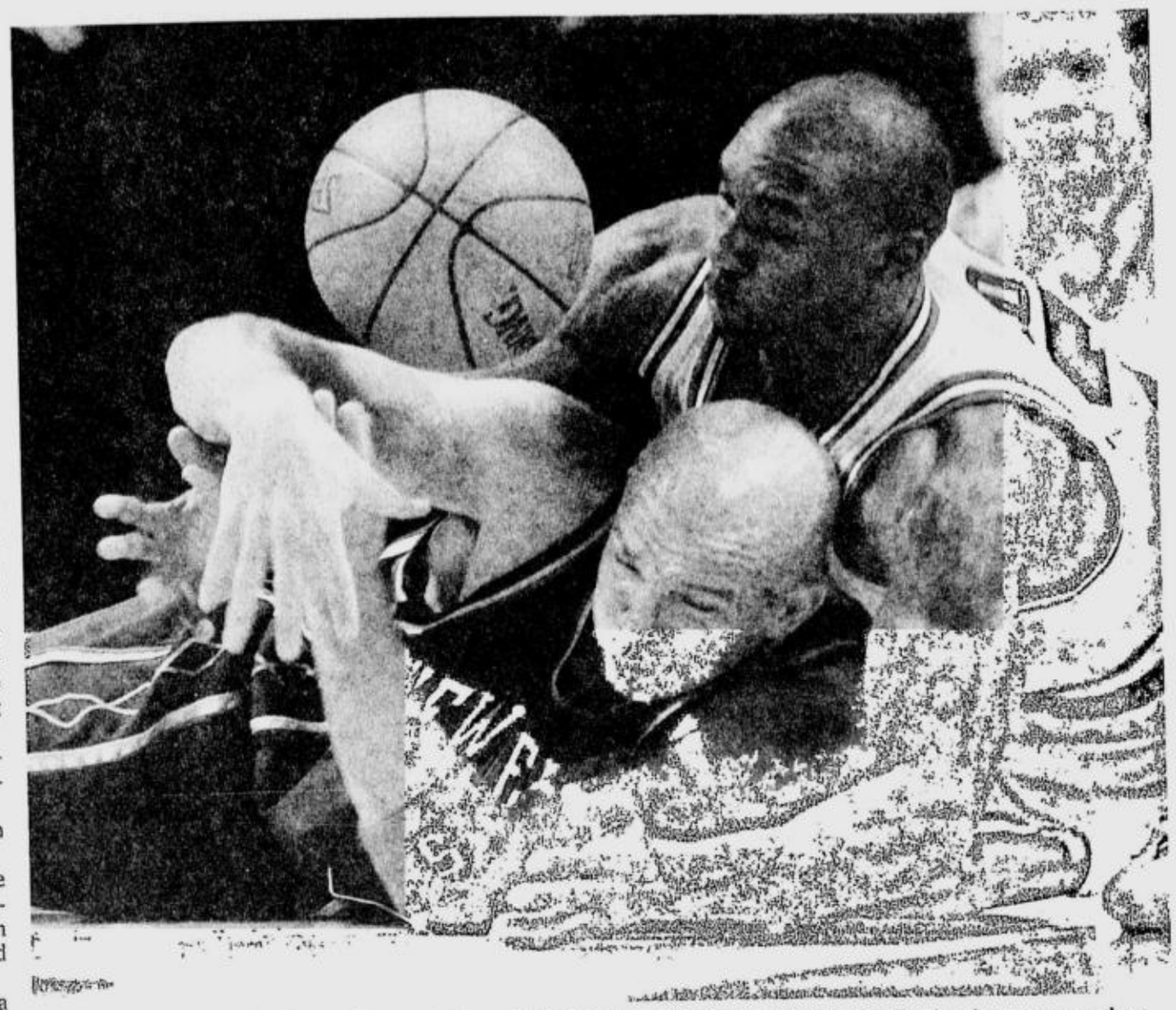
Gordon scored 20 of his points in the first half, which ended with Chicago leading 49-35. The Nets pulled within 65-61 in the third quarter before taking command in the fourth.

Chicago scored the first 18 points in a Jan. 5 game with the Nets in East Rutherford, but New Jersey battled back to win 91-86.

Steve Nash dished out 21 assists—the most in the NBA this season—as the host Phoenix Suns crushed the Cleveland Cavaliers, 109-90, for their eighth consecutive victory.

Shawn Marion scored 19 points to lead five Phoenix players in double figures in the showdown between two of the league's top teams.

LeBron James had 34 points for the Eastern Conference-leading Cavaliers, who had a five-game winning streak halted.



AMONG the numbers that do not show up in Jason Kidd's 82nd career triple double is the hustle plays he creates, such as this one, where he battles for the loose ball against Chicago's Ben Gordon. REUTERS

Webber waived

In Philadelphia, the 76ers waived forward Chris Webber on Thursday, making the five-time NBA All-Star eligible to sign with another team after clearing waivers.

The Sixers completed the paperwork to buy out the remaining 1½ seasons on Webber's contract on Wednesday, ending two disappointing years in Philadelphia. Once he clears waivers after 48 business hours, teams will be eligible to sign him.

Webber missed 11 of the last 14 games, officially with foot and ankle injuries. He was due nearly $21 million (euro16 million) this season and $22 million (euro17 million) next season.

Webber, the No. 1 overall pick in the 1993 draft, averaged 11 points and 8.3 rebounds in 18 games this season. He has career averages of 21.4 points and 10 rebounds. Reuters, AP

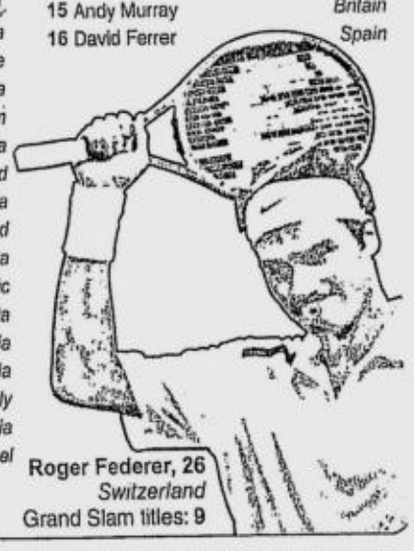
• NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV

8 a.m.—Milwaukee vs. Philadelphia (replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

AUSTRALIAN OPEN TENNIS SEEDS

The 2007 Australian Open starts at Melbourne Park on Monday

Maria Sharapova, 20
Russia
Grand Slam titles: 2



Roger Federer, 26
Switzerland
Grand Slam titles: 9

MEN	
1 Roger Federer	Switzerland
2 Rafael Nadal	Spain
3 Nikolay Davydenko	Russia
4 Ivan Ljubicic	Croatia
5 James Blake	U.S.
6 Andy Roddick	U.S
7 Tommy Robredo	Spain
8 David Nalbandian	Argentina
9 Mario Ancic	Croatia
10 Fernando Gonzalez	Chile
11 Marcos Baghdatis	Cyprus
12 Tommy Haas	Germany
13 Tomas Berdych	Czech Republic
14 Novak Djokovic	Serbia
15 Andy Murray	Britain
16 David Ferrer	Spain

WOMEN	
1 Maria Sharapova	Russia
2 Amelie Mauresmo	France
3 Svetlana Kuznetsova	Russia
4 Kim Clijsters	Belgium
5 Nadia Petrova	Russia
6 Martina Hingis	Switzerland
7 Elena Dementieva	Russia
8 Patty Schnyder	Switzerland
9 Dinara Safina	Russia
10 Nicole Vaidisova	Czech Republic
11 Jelena Jankovic	Serbia
12 Anna Chakvetadze	Russia
13 Ana Ivanovic	Serbia
14 Francesca Schiavone	Italy
15 Daniela Hantuchova	Slovakia
16 Shahar Peer	Israel

REUTERS

PLAYERS TO BEAT: Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova lead the list of seeds released by the Australian Open as tennis' first Grand Slam event gets ready to kick off

Orcollo Derby's lord of the Ring

HALL OF FAMER EFREN "BATA" REYES AND money game king Dennis Orcollo struck anew for the Philippines in the 2007 Derby City Classic yesterday at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky.

The 52-year-old Reyes notched his fourth consecutive One Pocket title by beating American Cliff Joyner, 3-1, in the finals while Orcollo secured his second 10-ball Ring Game crown by besting compatriots Jose "Amang" Parica, and Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Americans Johnny Archer and Corey Deuel in succession.

With the win, Reyes, playing under the auspices of RP billiards patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, boosted his bid for the "Master of the Table" bonus prize. Reyes earlier finished runner-up in the 9-ball Banks event behind Steve Moore.

En route to the One Pocket finals, Reyes defeated Mike Davis, Parica, and Shawn Putnam in rounds eight, nine and 10, respectively, before downing Bustamante twice in a row to gain the twice-to-beat advantage.

Reyes and Orcollo are also playing in the regular 9-ball event, the third Classic tournament, that got underway yesterday for the $25,000 "Master of the Table" bonus prize.

The 27-year-old Orcollo's triumph was a fitting follow up to his victory in first Ring Game side event, where he embarrassed in a nationally televised match Jon Hennessee, Sparky Ferrel, Richie Orem and Deuel by not letting them to the table as soon as he occupied it.

ORCOLLO

REYES

In his first 9-ball assignment, Orcollo posted a come from behind 7-5 victory over Deuel. Down, 5-2, Orcollo clustered five racks to turn the match around

"Most of the players really go to the Derby City Classic for the 10-ball Ring Game and other money game events," said Orcollo's manager Perry Mariano in Filipino. "The One-Pocket and 9-Ball Banks are but novelty games. Though they are among the main events, the purses are small with the exception of the 9-Ball event."

Orcollo has also won $10,000 in private money games. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Nat'l tourney, 3-on-3 highlight FBL year

THE FUTURES BASKETBALL LEAGUE (FBL), will highlight its calendar this year with national championships for both the regular competition and its inaugural 3-on-3 tournament.

"We have been encouraged by the tremendous response by the schools to our initial tournament in 2005," said Nino Sinco. "Last year we expanded into Mindanao and the Visayas, aside from the Metro Manila edition that had 55 boys' and girls' school teams participating. This year we want to introduce the 3-on-3 tournament and the all-girls tournament."

FBL action starts with the 3-on-3 Baller tournament on Feb. 4 and the succeeding Sundays of February, with regional tournaments in Davao, Cebu, and tentatively Pampanga on April and May with boys' competition for 10 and under, 11 to 13, 14 to 16, and 17 to 19.

It will be the same for the girls' except for the 11 to 13 age group. This summer will also see the inaugural Metro Manila FBL all-girls tournament for 13 and under, 14 to 16, and 17 to 19 years old, to be followed by the main FBL nationwide tournament for boys and girls, 8 to 10 and 11 to 13 years old for boys and 13 and below for girls.

Last year, San Beda College-Alabang, Ateneo de Manila, and Miriam College won their respective divisions.

BECKHAM INVADES U.S.

'Galactico' takes act to a different galaxy

LOS ANGELES—DAVID BECKHAM HAS conquered the rest of the world as the most recognized soccer player around. Now, he's beginning his march across America.

Taking the first step Thursday, Beckham announced a five-year deal to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy, starting this summer.

"Beckham Comes to America" flashed on video screens outside Staples Center, owned by AEG, the sports and entertainment company that runs the Galaxy.

Beckham's first task? Converting football, baseball and basketball-crazed Americans into soccer fans.

That could be his biggest hurdle since the United States is the last—and largest—market where Beckham's cult of personality has few believers. A superstar whose movements have convulsed Asian capitals and helped sell millions of European tabloids has been able to walk American streets in relative anonymity.

"There are so many great sports in America," said Beckham, the 31-year-old former England captain and one of Real Madrid's so-called "Galacticos." "There are so many kids that play baseball, American football, basketball. But soccer is huge all around the world apart from America, so that's where I want to make a difference with the kids."

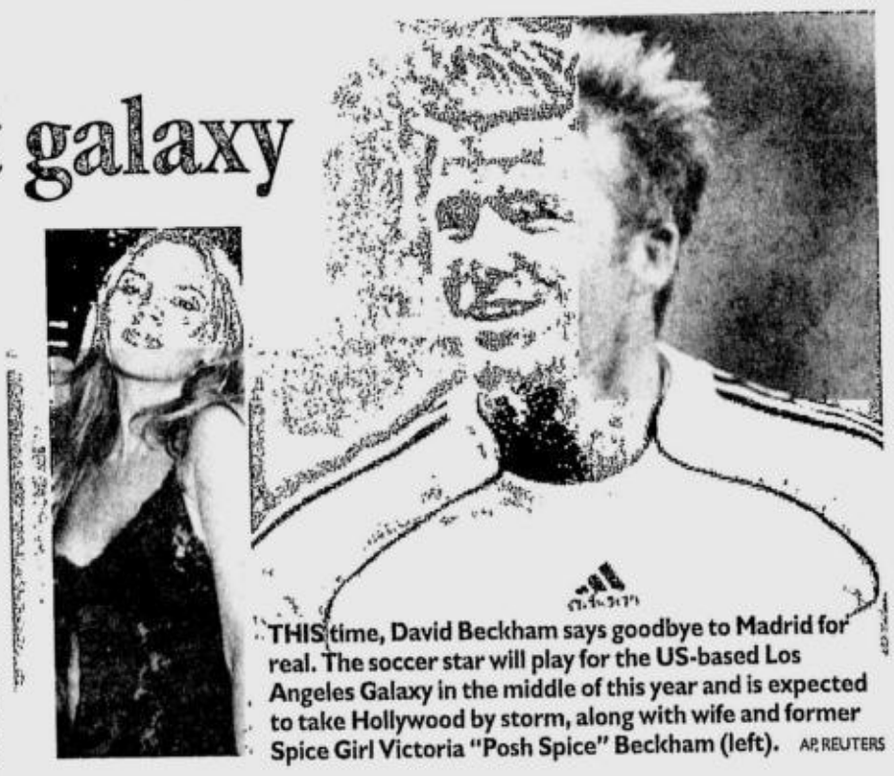
The Beckham effect was felt immediately: The Galaxy sold 1,000 new season tickets Thursday morning. Their season begins April 8.

The Galaxy didn't say exactly what they'll pay him, but floated a figure of $250 million in salary and commercial endorsements over the five years of his contract. In other words, his move could be worth $1 million a week.

Beckham has not found much success since he moved to Spanish team Real Madrid in 2003 from Manchester United, where he won six league titles, two FA Cups and the Champions League title. He has no major trophies with the nine-time European Cup champions.

Off the field, all the pieces are in place for Beckham's entry into Hollywood:

- His deal was negotiated in a mere 10 days by major entertainment industry players Simon Fuller, creator of "American Idol."
- He already has a soccer academy at the Galaxy's stadium complex in suburban Carson.
- He and Spice Girl wife Victoria count Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise as pals and have enough other high-profile friends to be out on the town every night. *AP*



THIS time, David Beckham says goodbye to Madrid for real. The soccer star will play for the US-based Los Angeles Galaxy in the middle of this year and is expected to take Hollywood by storm, along with wife and former Spice Girl Victoria "Posh Spice" Beckham (left). AP, REUTERS

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Paragua, So lead RP Zonal charge

GRANDMASTER MARK Paragua and International Master Wesley So hurdled their respective opponents Thursday night to lead the first round charge of Filipino bets in the 2007 Asian Zonal Chess Championships in Phu Quoc in Vietnam's Kien Giang province.

Paragua, the tournament top seed with an Elo rating of 2573, beat Vietnamese Fide Master Dinh Duc Trong with the white pieces in 42 moves of a Pirc duel.

PARAGUA

The 13-year-old So, the country's youngest ever national champion, beat local bet Bao Khoa to arrange a second-round showdown with Paragua, who is eyeing his third stint in the World Championships.

Other Filipino opening day winners were GM Nelson Mariano II, IM Oliver Dimakiling and National Masters Oliver Barbosa, Nouri Hamed and Julius Joseph de Ramos.

Mariano, the former Asian junior champion, trounced FM Lo Kin Mon Dominic of Singapore while Dimakiling waylaid Gundavaa Bayarsaihan of Myanmar.

Barbosa downed Khandar Khausal of Malaysia, Hamed nipped Tran Ngoc Lon of Vietnam and De Ramos crushed FM Nuyen Huynh Minh of Vietnam.

GMs Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. and Eugene Torre and IMs Darwin Laylo and Ronald Dableo settled for draws.

Antonio split the point with FM Pham Chuong of Vietnam, Torre with Hoang Canh Huan, Laylo with FM Ton That Nhu Tung of Vietnam and Dableo with Shanmugam Ravindran of Indonesia.

"It is a good start for Filipino chessers," said National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr.

In women's play, WNM Catherine Pereña beat Le Thi Tha of Vietnam.

Not as fortunate were compatriots WIMs Beverly Mendoza and Sheerie Joy Lomibao and WNMs Christy Lamiel Bernales and Kimberly Jane Cunanan who dropped their first round assignments.

Mendoza lost to WIM Le Kieu Thien Kim of Vietnam, Lomibao to top pick WGM Mongontuul Bathuyag of Vietnam, Bernales to WFM Sukandar Irine Kharisma of Indonesia and Cunanan to WFM Le Thanh Tu of Vietnam. *NM Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

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VAT collections hit ₱127.3B in 11 months

Missed target by 3%, but 63% higher year-on-year

By Michelle V. Remo

VALUE-ADDED TAX COLLECTION BY THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue reached P127.3 billion in January to November last year, missing by 3 percent the P131.6-billion goal for the 11-month period.

But year-on-year, the BIR's VAT collection surged 63.25 percent from P78 billion in the same period in 2005.

The 12-percent VAT is a form of sales tax imposed on goods and services.

The BIR, which missed its tax collection goal for 2006, said shortfalls in its tax collection were partly due to the assignment of very high targets and factors that were beyond its control.

Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag has stressed that some macroeconomic assumptions used in setting the BIR's targets were not realized.

He cited that while actual economic growth, which affects tax collection, did not always hit the government's target, fiscal authorities failed to make the BIR's targets flexible with the actual economic growth.

In January to September last year, the country's economy grew by 5.4 percent, still slightly short of the full-year target of 5.5 percent.

The BIR has also pointed to the slower-than-expected inflation rate as another factor pulling down the BIR's tax collection.

The lower inflation rate meant lower-than-expected consumer prices and therefore lower collection of value-added tax on goods and services.

Estimates by the Department of Finance showed that the BIR lost P10.2 billion in potential tax collection due to the slowdown in inflation. Average inflation for 2006 hit only 5.2 per-

VAT/ B2

PCCI names Samie Lim president

By Abigail L. Ho

LIM

THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF Commerce and Industry has elected Samie Lim, touted as the father of franchising in the Philippines, as its new president.

"As chairman or director of a number of companies of diverse fields, including industrial trading, real estate, service, franchising, furniture, and information and communications technology, he was able to demonstrate his keen sense on setting and acting on business goals and objectives," the PCCI said in a statement yesterday.

Lim is president of appliance retailer Automatic Center and Blims Fine Furniture and chair of Colins International Trading Corp. and Fiber City Inc.

Prior to the top PCCI post, Lim has had years of experience in steering various business and industry groups both here and abroad.

In business circles, he is commonly known as the "father of franchising in the

PCCI/ B2

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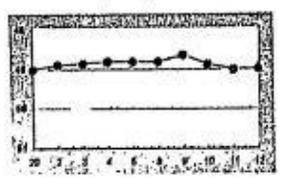


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱49.015 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 12, 2006

STOCK MARKET

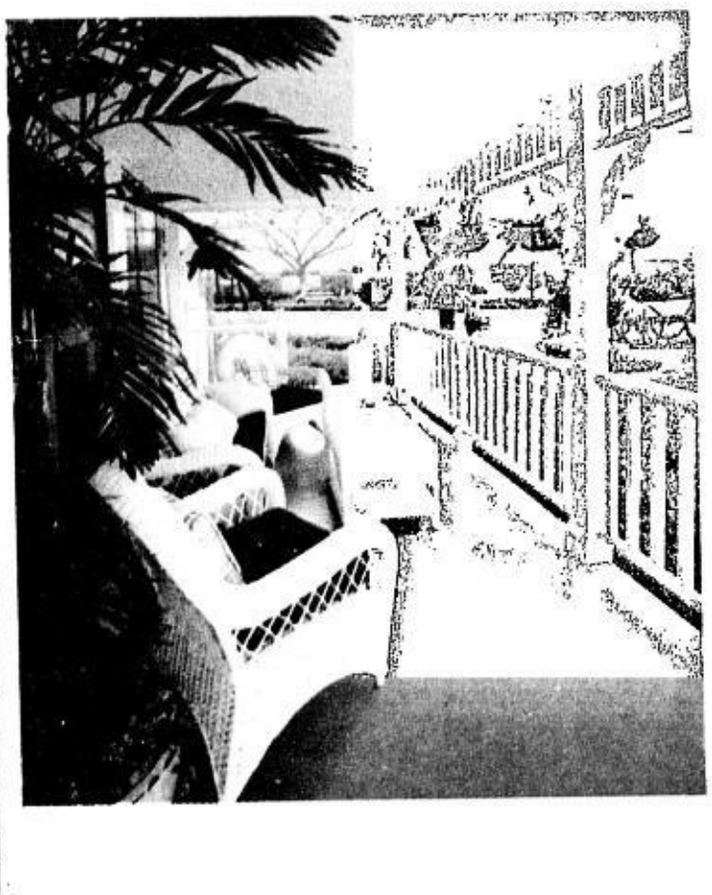
(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 1.77% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.77-PERCENT higher yesterday as investors hunted for bargains among blue-chips that have fallen to attractive levels in recent trade, dealers said.

SHARES/ B2

Brittany



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BSP redefines Dosri guidelines

Limit placed on lending to banks' own affiliates

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has redefined its guidelines on lending by banks to its own directors, officers, stockholders and related interests (Dosri) in an effort to free up more funds for the banks' subsidiaries and affiliates.

Some banks used to complain that the old definition of "related interests" under the Dosri rule was "too stringent," forcing their good subsidiaries and affiliates to source financing elsewhere.

This prompted the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board to approve on Thursday the introduction of a specific ceiling on the amount of loans that individual subsidiaries and affiliates could tap from any bank, BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said.

"Lending to banks' own subsidiaries and affiliates are now subject to a specific limit," Espenilla said. "For each (subsidiary, lending) can't exceed more than 10 percent of the net worth of each bank, of which a maximum of 5 percent can be unsecured."

Unsecured loans, or those that are not backed up by collateral, shall be deductible from a lenders' capital, he added.

The affiliates' share of the Dosri loan allocation will thus be taken out from the current Dosri limits.

Under the new definition, the "related interests" under the Dosri will now refer to "related interests" of the banks' directors, officers and stockholders, Espenilla said. It will no longer refer to "related interests" of the lending bank itself.

The 10 percent individual ceiling shall then be introduced to the related interests of the lending bank itself, he added.

"But even though there's a ceiling, all lending should be made on an arm's length basis, meaning, it must be based on commercial terms," Espenilla explained.

The redefinition was approved after months of regulatory review. In June last year, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters that the banking regulator was studying amendments to the definition of "related interests" under the Dosri rule because there were those who considered it to be "too stringent."

Section 36 of the General Banking Law of 2000 limits banks' Dosri exposure to an amount equivalent to the borrower's unencumbered deposits and book value of paid-in contribution in the bank. The unsecured loans and other Dosri credit accommodations and guarantees must not exceed 30 percent of a bank's overall exposure.

The law likewise prescribes that each bank's Dosri exposure should not exceed 15 percent of its total loan portfolio or 100 percent of its net worth, whichever is lower, provided that the Dosri lending would not exceed 30 percent of the aggregate ceiling or outstanding loans and other credit accommodations and guarantees whichever is lower.

Under the old implementing guidelines, these "related interests" were defined as: Any corporation, association or firm which controls directly or indirectly ... at least 20 percent of the subscribed capital base of a substantial stockholder of the lending bank.

US court orders Araneta to pay ATR

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A COURT IN THE UNITED STATES has ordered businessman Carlos Araneta and two other defendants to pay $24.49 million in damages to the ATR group.

The ATR group furnished the Philippine Stock Exchange with a copy of the two-page order penned by Leo Strine Jr., vice chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery.

The Chancery Court is a court of equity, as opposed to a court of law. It settles disputes involving the internal affairs of corporations and other business entities.

The Delaware court earlier ruled in favor of plaintiff ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp. over its case against businessman Carlos R. Araneta, owner of LBC Global Corp., the firm over the weekend said in its disclosure to the PSE.

ATRKE Financial, and its unit, ATR Kim Eng Capital Partners Inc., had filed a case against Araneta, Hugo Bonilla, Ma. Eliza Berenguer, and Marites Vicente for alleged waste and breach of fiduciary duty over the disappearance of substantial assets of LBC Global Corp. without notice. ATRKE Financial has a 10-percent interest in LBC Global, the Delaware-based holding company of the LBC Group.

In a letter to the PSE, ATRKE Financial executive vice president Renato L. Leveriza Jr. reported that the Delaware Court's decision favors the plaintiff. The court issued its decision on Dec. 21, 2006.

"I find in favor of ATR on each of its claims and award ATR $3.92 million in damages plus pre-judgment as well as post-judgment interest on this amount," said Strine of the Delaware Court.

The US court set the interest at 25 percent per annum, compounded monthly. The court also ruled that Bonilla and Berenguer are jointly liable with Araneta to pay the damages.

The court said Araneta breached his duty by stripping the Delaware holding company of its major assets for no consideration.

Housing loans grant rose to ₱63.2B in '06

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED Home Guarantee Corp. reported that its outstanding guaranty to housing loans climbed to a record-high of P63.2 billion as of end-2006, signaling a rising demand for housing.

"This is the highest amount in HGC's history," HGC president Gonzalo B.A. Bongolan told reporters. "The growth came about despite moves of HGC to stop guaranteeing risky mass-housing projects and focus only on individual housing."

Established under Republic Act No. 8763, HGC is mandated to operate a credit guaranty program to support government efforts to promote home ownership. Particularly, it provides guaranty to housing loans extended by financial institutions to credit applicants.

According to a report posted by the HGC on its website, about half, or P31.8 billion, of the outstanding guarantee covers loans for "socialized" housing, or units that each cost below P300,000.

Bongolan said the increase in demand for housing indicated that the sector has begun recovering from the slump experienced during the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.

Demand for housing is partly boosted by growth in family income resulting from higher remittances from overseas Filipino workers, Bongolan said.

The HGC chief agreed with analysts who said that housing is one of the primary investment options of families of OFWs.

Remittances from OFWs have been hitting record highs, as the number of Filipinos deployed abroad continues to grow. Government data showed OFW remittances reached $10.297 billion in January to October 2006, growing 16.6 percent from the same period of the previous year.

UnionBank to raise $100M in share offer

THE ABOITIZ GROUP'S UNION Bank of the Philippines is raising $100 million in core capital through the sale of new shares in the stock market in the first quarter.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, UnionBank said its board of directors had tapped Macquarie Securities Inc. as lead manager for its fresh equity offering.

UnionBank president Victor Valdepeñas yesterday said the new public offering, worth about $100 million, would boost the bank's capital structure, particularly in view of its recent acquisition of International Exchange Bank and the banking regulators' adoption of stiffer capital adequacy requirements under the Basel 2 starting July 1.

"The proceeds will be used to expand our business franchise," Valdepeñas said. He expects iBank to be fully integrated with UnionBank in the first quarter.

The merger with iBank will create the banking industry's ninth largest bank, edging out Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. It will also become the country's seventh largest private universal bank with assets of around P170 billion and deposit base of close to P100 billion.

Even as UnionBank is still digesting its acquisition of iBank, the bank is on the look-out for further buyout opportunities as part of the bank's ambition to be among the country's top three banks by 2010.

Doris C. Dumlao

Transco asset sale hits ₱2-B mark

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL TRANSMISSION Corp. (Transco) has breached the P2-billion mark in the sale of its sub-transmission assets, following yesterday's signing of a P48.7-million lease purchase agreement with the Ilocos Sur Electric Cooperative (Iseco).

In a statement issued yesterday, the state firm said the deal involved the sale of 420 structures, including the San Esteban-Candon, New Bantay-Sto. Domingo and San Esteban-Narvacan junction and take-off lines spanning a total of 42 kilometers.

Iseco will remit 20 percent of the purchase price to Transco upon the contract's approval by the Energy Regulatory Commission. The balance is then payable in 16 years and nine months.

The ERC has so far approved only two contracts that Transco has inked with more than 30 distribution utilities and electric cooperatives since the state firm started selling its sub-transmission assets in January 2004.

These contracts are with the San Fernando Electric Light and Power Corp. and Cabanatuan Electric Corp.

Including the Iseco deal, Transco has signed 39 sale packages with 36 distribution utilities and electric cooperatives nationwide, involving P2.02 billion worth of sub-transmission assets.

RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), requires Transco to sell all its sub-transmission assets to qualified power distributors.

"TransCo is truly proud of this milestone," TransCo president Arthur Aguilar said. "Reaching the P2-billion mark is a significant development in our aggressive efforts to divest our sub-transmission assets to qualified electric cooperatives, as mandated by the Epira."

VAT collections hit ₱127.3B in 11 months

From page B1

cent compared with the 6.9-percent projection when the tax collection target was set.

The BIR, the main revenue earner for the national government, was tasked to collect P675.4 billion in 2006, but it generated only P646.9 billion.

Despite the shortfalls in the BIR's collection, the DOF said the national government was expected to have significantly improved its fiscal condition and reduced its budget deficit. The government's budget deficit for 2006 will be announced next week.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves has projected that the deficit for 2006 likely settled anywhere between P80 billion and P90 billion. The expected lower-than-programmed deficit was largely due to tight spending by the government.

The government was forced to restrain its spending following the failure of Congress to pass the proposed P1.053-trillion national budget for 2006. The government was therefore forced to operate using the reenacted budget of 2005, which was about P100 billion lower.

PCCI names Samie ...

From page B1

Philippines," being the founding president and chair of the Philippine Franchise Association.

He is also the immediate past chair of the Asia-Pacific Franchise Confederation as well as former vice chair for Asia of the World Franchise Council.

In recognition of his business expertise and long list of accomplishments, his peers named him chair emeritus of the Philippine Retailers Association. He also served as chair of the Federation of Asian Retailers Associations.

His other positions in business and industry groups include: chair of the Philippines-Korea Economic Council, governor of Private Investment Trade Opportunities of the Philippines, president of the Appliance Distributors Association of the Philippines, vice president of the Chamber of Furniture Industry of the Philippines, vice president of the Philippine Office Machine Distributors Association of the Philippines, vice president of the Information Technology Association of the Philippines, and board member of the Export Development Council.

Lim also served as trade undersecretary and general manager of the state-owned National Development Co. in 1999, where he pioneered some key agriculture, fisheries and ICT projects.

He also served as chair of First Cavite Industrial Estate and the World Trade Center.

The new set of PCCI officers include Donald Dee as chair, Miguel Varela as chair emeritus and Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr. as honorary chair.

Board members include Xavier Aboitiz, Jose Alejandro, William Co, Eric Cruz, Francis Ferrer, Francisco Floro, Raul Hernandez, Eduardo Ong, Edgardo Lacson, Antonio Lopa, George Siy, Jimmy Tang, Alfredo Yao, Angelito Colona, Marcus Romera, Renato Simbulan, Jose Ng and Estrellita Juliano-Tamano.

Shares ...

From page B1

Wall Street's overnight gains further lent support to the rebound, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 52.17 points to the day's high of 2,992.33, off a low of 2,940.16.

The broader all-share index rose 28.59 points to 1,868.93.

Gainers outnumbered losers 61 to 34, while 71 were unchanged. Volume was 441.15 million shares valued at P3.53 billion.

"Investors are just digesting news that continue to support improved macroeconomic prospects for the country," said Harry Liu of Summit Securities.

"But generally, the market is still in a consolidation mode and waiting for stronger leads that will support a breakout."

Top-traded PNOC Energy Development Corp. jumped 25 centavos to P4.90.

Ayala Corp. was up P25 at P570. Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) advanced P40 to P2,440. AFP

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 12, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	45	45	44.5	44.5	1,225,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	66	67.5	66	67.5	1,451,300
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	2,520
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	19	20	19	20	3,400
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	5,680,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	80	80	80	80	71,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	52	53.5	52	53	3,143,400
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	1,000
Philippine National Bank	46	47	46	46	54,100
Phil. Savings Bank	48	48	48	48	2,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	29	30.5	29	29	914,700
Security Bank Corp.	67	67.5	66.5	67	394,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	48.5	49.5	48.5	49.5	75,200
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	470,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.85	4.9	487,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1605	1600	1605	140
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.44	286,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	292.5	292.5	290	290	6,500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1970	2000	1970	2000	740
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.62	1,661,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	4.7	5	4.7	4.9	99,959,000
First Gen Corp.	53	53.5	53	53.5	1,168,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	69.5	73	69.5	73	1,154,500
Manila Electric Co. A	55.5	57.5	55.5	57	831,800
Manila Electric Co. B	56	58.5	55.5	58	1,123,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.9	769,000
Petron Corp.	4.05	4.1	4.05	4.1	5,281,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	150,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	275,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	207,000
CADP Group Corp.	2	2	2	2	6,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	577,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42.5	43	42.5	43	135,800
RFM Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	482,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	3.1	2.7	3	2,659,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63	63.5	29,000
San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	76.5	75.5	76.5	682,500
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	14,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.04	2.04	1,890,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.25	19.25	18.75	19	156,800
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.18	1.24	1.18	1.2	62,859,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.75	673,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	8.1	7.9	8	735,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	5,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.2	4.35	4.2	4.35	655,000
Supercity Rlty Dev. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	35,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.5	5.5	14,789,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.76	0.78	0.74	0.74	42,350,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.215	0.23	0.21	0.215	24,750,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	3,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	127,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	28,000,000
Ayala Corp.	545	570	545	570	210,670
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	350,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.4	9	8.4	8.8	8,275,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.3	10,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0675	0.0675	91,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.85	2.9	2.85	2.85	218,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	5,520,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	686,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	1,448,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	30,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	180,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	33,200
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.65	2.8	19,096,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6	758,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.85	0.9	0.8	0.89	300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.55	4.6	1,521,000
Global Business Hldgs Inc.	70	70	70	70	158,700
House Of Investments Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.08	2.08	346,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.5	971,800
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.65	889,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.9	1.96	1.88	1.88	4,193,000
Pacifica	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	128,200,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	1,290,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.165	4,950,000
SM Investments Corp.	315	317.5	315	317.5	220,250
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	4,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	6,200,000
Vivant Corp.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	10,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	410,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	23,055,900
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	40,000
Belle Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	7,846,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.66	1.66	226,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.7	321,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	1,420,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	1,140,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.46	1.68	1.46	1.6	1,997,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	15,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,040,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	570,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.63	19,910,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.68	1.58	1.64	441,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.0625	0.06	0.06	3,000,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.66	1.68	89,732,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.13	1,510,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.56	0.59	0.55	0.55	45,540,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.87	0.95	0.85	0.87	39,230,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.42	2.44	2.36	2.44	61,320,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	258,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.37	870,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	540,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.25	15.5	15.25	15.5	11,136,400
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.69	9,250,000
SM Development Corp.	3.25	3.4	3.25	3.35	4,728,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.25	8,819,800
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.58	0.58	290,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	800,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	17,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1	1	1	1	30,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2	2.04	2	2.04	36,501,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1190	1195	1180	1180	56,440
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	5,085,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2405	2445	2405	2440	113,080
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	12,070,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.021	28,100,000
Ionics Inc.	2.5	2.65	2.5	2.6	2,187,000
IPVG Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	61,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	73,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.36	1.48	1.36	1.42	468,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.7	2.7	2.55	2.65	6,304,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.034	33,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.05	4.05	4	4	331,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.82	1.88	1.82	1.82	254,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24	25	23.75	25	1,890,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	180,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.06	2.1	2,234,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	15,370,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.08	2.08	321,000
Paxys Inc.	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.25	573,500
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	1,297,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.3	608,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	72,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9	9	8.9	8.9	764,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.1	9.1	9	9	64,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	50,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	3,150,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	6,790,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	134,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	210,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	464,100,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.75	2,362,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	16	16	15.75	16	166,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.71	0.69	0.69	810,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.46	3,691,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	4,300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	49,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	6,600,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.08	2,244,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.12	1.14	1.1	1.12	776,000
PNOC Exploration Corp.-B	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	3,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10	10.25	10	10.25	417,000

CURRENCIES

January 12, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.775314	1.000000	49.0000
Japan	Yen	0.006437	0.008302	0.4068
United Kingdom	Pound	1.508994	1.946300	95.3687
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099430	0.128245	6.2840
Switzerland	Franc	0.620798	0.800705	39.2345
Canada	Dollar	0.658945	0.849907	41.6454
Singapore	Dollar	0.501756	0.647165	31.7111
Australia	Dollar	0.606045	0.781677	38.3022
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.056699	2.652731	129.9838
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206751	0.266667	13.0667
Brunei	Dollar	0.500138	0.645078	31.6088
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021627	0.027894	1.3668
UAE	Dirham	0.211108	0.272287	13.3421
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.289800	63.2002
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.001065	0.0522
China	Yuan**	0.099464	0.128289	6.2862
Argentina	Peso	0.251930	0.324939	15.9220
Brazil	Real	0.361451	0.466200	22.8438
Denmark	Kroner	0.134184	0.173070	8.4804
India	Rupee	0.017427	0.022477	1.1014
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220447	0.284333	13.9323
Mexico	New Peso	0.070419	0.090827	4.4505
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536586	0.692089	33.9124
South Africa	Rand	0.107384	0.138504	6.7867
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023684	0.030548	1.4969

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Jan. 11, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Jan. 11, 2007

Baguio ecozone leases part of John Hay property

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES CONVERSION DEvelopment Authority last month signed a 25-year lease agreement with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority covering part of the Camp John Hay property in Baguio City.

The contract was signed following the issuance on Dec. 11 last year of Presidential Proclamation No. 1191 designating the 301.86-hectare John Hay Special Economic Zone as a special tourism economic zone.

BCDA subsidiary John Hay Management Corp. is in charge of a total of 695 hectares of land, but the land that PP 1161 does not cover are populated areas and forest reservations.

Lyssa Pagano-Calde, JMHC vice president and chief operating officer, said in an interview the lease covered a 6.5-ha lot that Peza would offer as expansion areas for existing locators as well as sites for new investors at the state-run Baguio City Economic Zone.

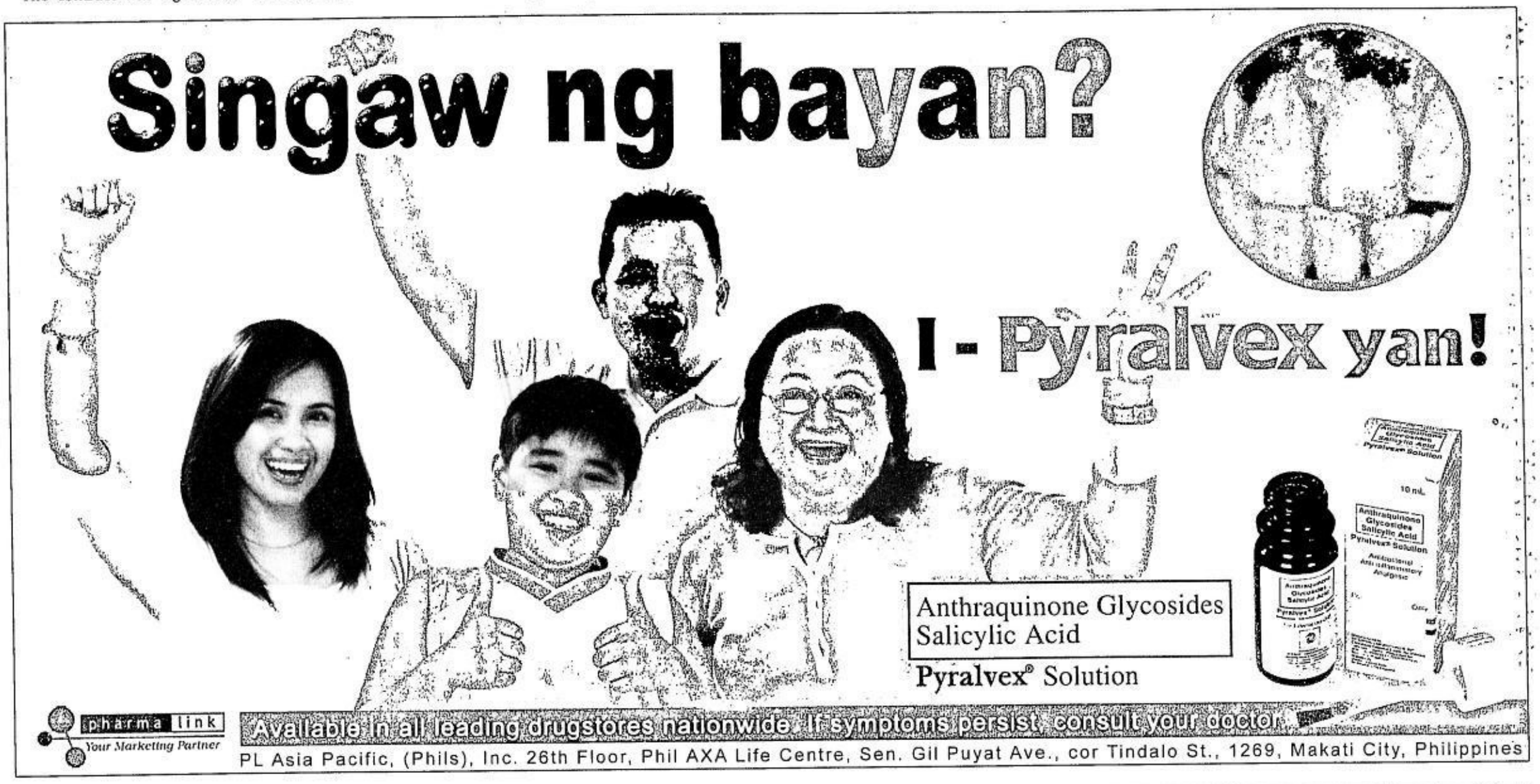
"The property is located in Barangay Kadaclan and is an undeveloped piece of land," Calde said. "The contract is renewable for another 25 years."

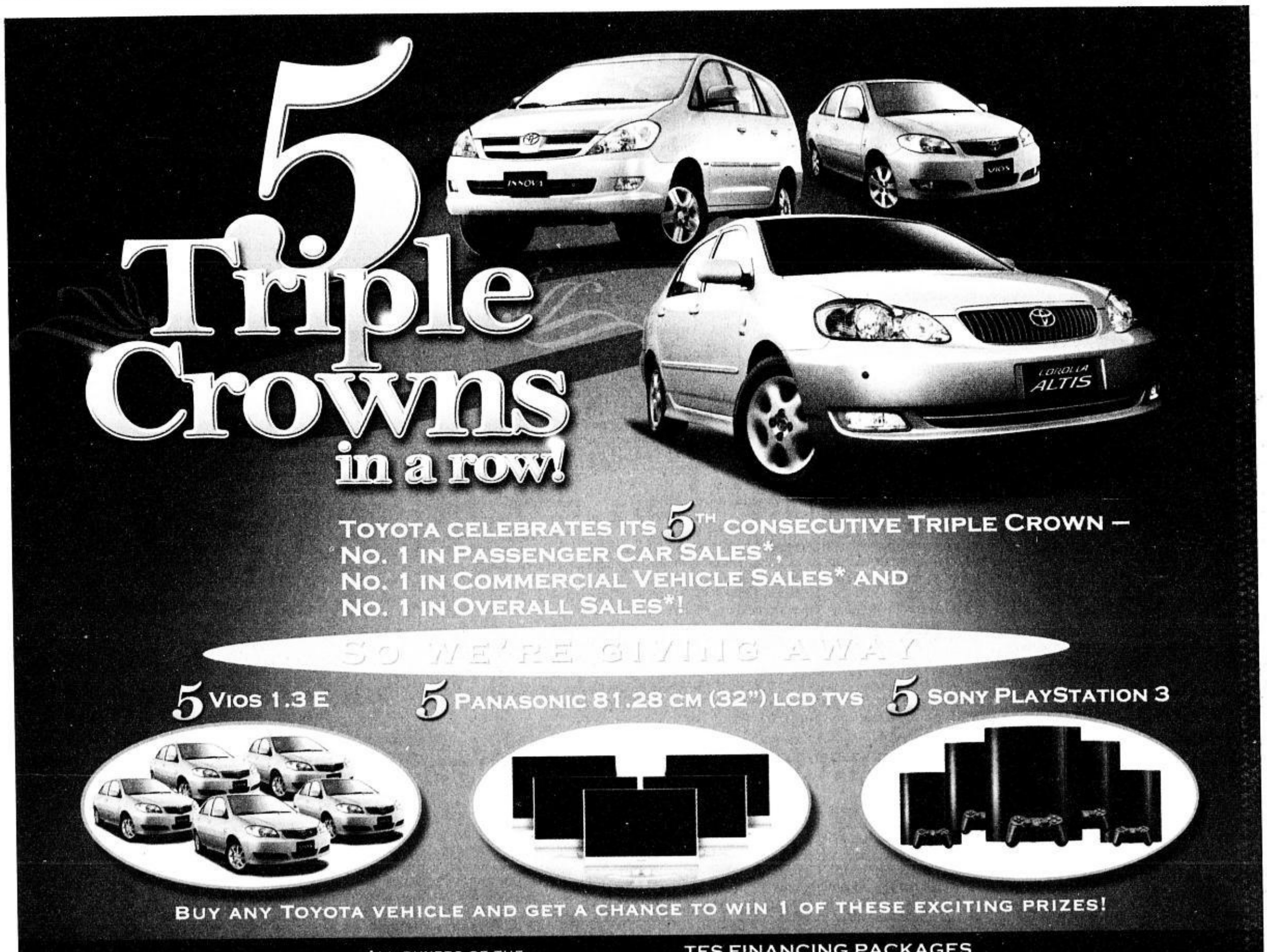
She said the agreement was entered into to assure the smooth facilitation of the planning, development and use of the leased area considering the interest and needs of BCEZ locators.

Under the contract, BCDA should provide within five years basic infrastructure for the lot's development that would cost P28 million at most. Calde said the agency was laying out an initial P7.6 million for this.

Construction work will cover a perimeter fence, downgrading of a road leading to Kadaclan Village, interior roads, reinforced pipe culvert drainage, sewer lines leading to BCEZ sewerage treatment plant, earthworks, retaining wall and main gate and guard outpost.

For its part, Peza will provide other needed infrastructure that would ensure the area is ready for occupancy.





PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

A PRIMARY concern among doctors and hospital staff is how to prevent SSI among women giving birth, especially those who may have to undergo episiotomy and episiorrhapy.

Topical antiseptic enough to protect women giving birth

By Charles E. Buban

SURGICAL WOUND INFECTions, otherwise known as surgical site infections (SSIs), are serious risks associated with any surgical procedure and represent a significant burden in terms of complications and deaths.

SSIs, which are infections at the site of an operation (usually an incision), are usually caused by bacteria on the patient's skin, although in some cases, by bacteria from the environment including skin of hospital staff.

"SSI certainly has the attention of many doctors, especially those taking care of women giving birth and most especially to those who may be required to undergo vaginal surgery like episiotomy and episiorrhapy," says Dr. Ricardo Manalastas Jr., professor at the Philippine General Hospital's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

An episiotomy is an incision made in the lower opening of the mother's vagina during delivery in the attempt to ease the passage of the baby through the vagina while an episiorrhaphy refers to the surgery to close this incision.

Makes sense

"Reducing the occurrence of SSIs make sense, especially if one is to consider the cost of curing the resulting infection and dealing with the complications that may arise. In our case, we are preventing these bacteria not only from infecting the incision but also from spreading to the baby," Manalastas says.

The popular practice is to give women giving birth oral antibiotics as well as applying topical antiseptics before, during and after the birth procedure.

However, during the years of his practice, Manalastas relates that giving oral antibiotics may not be necessary as topical antiseptics could do the job of protecting mothers and their babies against infections. He adds that antibiotics are wonderful, life-saving tools, but their overuse is dangerous.

"To be on the safe side, antibiotics should be withheld unless they are clearly needed. Judicious use of oral antibiotics makes sense and besides we should also allow the body's natural immune system to work its wonders," the doctor says.

Good news

Manalastas' findings also bring good news to a lot of mothers who may not have the financial capacity to afford oral antibiotics.

He also did a paper on another topical antiseptic, in the form of vaginal wash, that may prove helpful to women who have allergic reaction to povidone iodine (a widely used antiseptic) or those who find lactic acid-based vaginal wash not enough.

In his paper presented in September during the 2nd Biennial Asia-Oceania Genital Tract Infection and Neoplasia International Convention held in Cebu City, Manalastas found that chlorhexidine digluconate performed excellently in preventing SSI in women undergoing episiotomy and episiorrhaphy during delivery.

"Based on my research, chlorhexidine digluconate has been proven to be just as, if not more effective than povidone iodine and lactic acid as an antiseptic genital wash during and after the surgical operation," he says.

Manalastas adds that since chlorhexidine digluconate is colorless, this agent often used in surgical scrubs as well as surgical wipes, could prove attractive to patients who don't want the stain caused by povidone iodine.

Prevent regrowth

While chlorhexidine diglutanate's primary benefit is its tremendous ability to kill bacteria on contact, the antiseptic's residual effect could prove its advantage as it prevents microbial regrowth after application.

"Among the 216 women who completed the trial, chlorhexidine diglutanate (using the brand GynePro), povidone iodine and lactic acid were equally moderately to extremely acceptable as antiseptic wash for external genitalia of women who have undergone episiotomy and episiorrhaphy. This means women now have more choices which they could discuss with their doctors," Manalastas reports.

Although the confidence of using the three are all high, Manalastas says the trend of SSI incidence was least in the group of women (who have undergone episiotomy and episiorrhapy) who used the chlorohexidine diglutanate.

Manalastas' paper titled, "A Randomized Controlled Trial Comparing the Efficacy, Acceptability and Safety of Chlorhexidine digluconate versus Povidone iodine and Lactic acid as an External Genital Antiseptic in Women who have Undergone Vaginal Surgery" won first prize in the Research Poster Contest held during the duration of the Aogin International Convention.

Christmas puzzle solutions

LAST WEEK WE LOOKED AT the solutions to the first two Christmas puzzles given last Dec. 23. Now we look at the explanations to the last three puzzles. Remember, only arithmetic and logic are needed to make sense of them.

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

Truth or Lie

Puzzle 3. You are at a club where there are only pure liars and pure truth-tellers. Rita comes up to you and says that the manager of the club told her that he was a liar. Is Rita a liar or a truth-teller? How do you know?

Reader Ryan Sylam Liwanag [rsliwanag@yahoo.com], my former student and now a successful businessperson I am proud of, asserts: Rita is a liar. Let us use proof by contradiction. Suppose Rita is not a liar. This means that the manager really did tell her that he was a liar. Let's examine this last statement. If he had been a liar, he would have said that he was telling the truth. If he had been otherwise, he would also have said that he was telling the truth. This leads us to the conclusion that the manager's statement, as told by Rita, was false. Therefore, Rita must be a liar.

Reader Viking Logarta [Viking_l@pacific.net.ph] puts it simply: If the people in the bar were all liars or truth-tellers, liars would always say that they were telling the truth and truth-tellers would also always say that they were telling the truth. No one would say they were telling a lie. So Rita must be lying.

Murder Mystery

Puzzle 4. Aaron, Bert, Carlos and David visited the neighborhood sauna daily at noon. While relaxing in the sauna, Aaron and Bert would read magazines, Carlos would drink cold juice from a cooler and David would chat on his cell phone. One day, when they left the sauna, they realized that David had not come out. When they returned to check on him, they found David with a fatal stab wound through his heart. The policeman searched the sauna for clues, but there was no trace of the murder weapon. He was a bright and imaginative policeman, so finally he was able to figure out that the murderer was one of David's friends. Who was the murderer and how did he kill David?

Reader Willy Calinawan [willycalinawan@yahoo.com] puts it simply: Carlos was the murderer. He stabbed David dead, using a pointed chunk of ice from the cooler. This murder weapon melted away before anyone could discover the crime.

Black or White Hat

Puzzle 5. The boss was looking for a smart college graduate to be his assistant. There were three applicants: Mario, Jose and Tony. The boss told the three men that he had five hats (three white and two black). He explained that he was going to put one hat on each of their heads. The first man to correctly give the color of his own hat, and explain how he solved the puzzle, would get the job. After the hats had been placed, Mario looked at the other two and said that he did not know the answer. Jose looked at Mario and Tony and said that he did not know the answer, either. Tony, who was blind, correctly stated the color of his hat and then went on to explain his reasoning. Tony got the job. What color was Tony's hat and how did he figure it out?

As observed by reader Gerard Gumban [qradav@gmail.com], I gave a variation of his puzzle two years ago, involving black and white marks on the forehead. Anyway, let us see another reader, Arnel Amparo [ajamparo@yahoo.com], says:

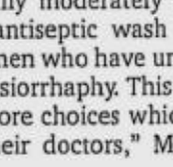
Tony's hat was white. Since there were three white hats and two black hats, Mario would have correctly concluded that his hat was white if he saw that Jose and Tony were both wearing black hats. Mario could not answer, so there were two possibilities: first, both Jose and Tony could have been wearing white hat and the other had a black hat. Jose also could not tell the color of his hat. Given the two possibilities, the only way Jose could have deduced the color of his hat was if he saw that the color of Tony's hat was black, in which case Jose's hat should be white. Therefore, we could assume either of the possibilities: first, both Jose and Tony were wearing white hats; second, Jose was wearing a black hat and Tony a white hat. In both cases, Tony was wearing a white hat. It was logical reasoning, not the ability to see, which enabled Tony to correctly determine the color of his hat, and eventually to get the job.

Happy New Year!

* * *

Queena N. Lee-Chua is professor of mathematics and psychology at Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

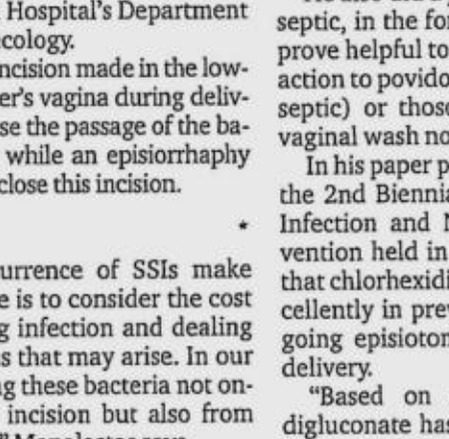
Warmer temperatures mean less fish



DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

BY NOW YOU'VE LIKELY EITHER SEEN "Happy Feet," "An Inconvenient Truth," or both. These movies discuss global warming and the resulting effects of the polar icecaps melting. The evidence that the earth's climate is changing however, can already be seen all around the world. Along America's eastern coast, for example, 2007 started with record high temperatures. Flowers bloomed in New York City when the ground should have been buried under layers of snow and ice. Unsurprisingly, researchers are already predicting that this year will be one of the warmest on record.



Oceanic temperatures around the world have also risen slightly over the years, enough to affect the marine life living there. In the North and Baltic seas, for example, records indicate that the temperatures in these bodies of water have increased just over one degree Celsius over the last 40 years. Climate change models apparently predict that the temperatures in these seas will go up by another 3-4 degrees Celsius within the next century.

Biological indicator

For Hans Pörtner and Rainer Kunst at the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Germany, this news does not bode well for the eelpout fish. They have been studying this fish population since 1993, using the eelpout as a biological indicator for conducting environmental monitoring studies. Based on their findings, which appear in the Jan. 5 issue of the journal Science, the eelpout population in the North Sea is declining because they can't survive in the warmer waters.

The problem is thermal tolerance. Every organism can exist within a certain temperature range; and needs to adapt in order to survive outside of that comfort zone. Humans for example take off clothes or adding them on as the temperature changes in order to stay comfortable. The people who live in Greenland, however, are more used to cooler temperatures than the people in, say, Brazil, and thus might go around in shorts and T-shirts when tourists from tropical climates wander around their country bundled in layers of warm clothing.

Thermally sensitive

Unlike people, however, the eelpout can't pull on a jacket or strip down to a bikini when its home waters change temperature. The fish are thermally sensitive and the warmer temperatures affect their ability to take in oxygen. When the fish can't breathe, their circulatory systems are affected. Unsurprisingly, this in turn affects their behavior, growth and reproduction.

As an analogy, consider the athletes who train in the mile-high city of Denver, Colorado. The thinner atmosphere at the higher elevation forces the athletes to take in more oxygen in order to perform as well as they do in lower elevation areas. When the athletes return to lower ground, they find that their lung capacity has increased as a result, which in turn can enhance their performance so that they can fly higher, swim faster, and generally live up to the Olympic motto.

Stunted growth

As Pörtner and Kunst note in their paper, they caught and released eelpout each summer in the southern North Sea, calculating the fish population based on their data. They found that in the warmer summers of 1994, 1997, 1999 and 2001, more fish died than were born. Larger fish are also more thermally sensitive than their smaller counterparts; they have more trouble adapting to temperature shifts. The eelpout that were able to make the transition to surviving in warmer waters were found to have stunted growth. Pörtner and Kunst also found similar results when they raised eelpout under laboratory conditions in warmer waters.

Overall, Pörtner and Kunst's findings may not come as much of a surprise. However, their findings do add evidence to the theory of global warming (as opposed to global cooling), and add urgency to the call to do something now. If the sea life dies as the world continues to warm up, the impact on the rest of the planet, not just in terms of food, is incalculable.

* * *

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

PSH-PLAS convention: Catching the 'thief'

MEDICAL FILES

HEART PROBLEMS MAY come like a thief in the night.

We were shocked to hear recently of the sudden death of a colleague, a pulmonary specialist who was well liked by both his fellow doctors and patients. He hardly had any symptom referable to the heart, was athletic, was at the prime of his life and peak of his career. He was on the way home after making rounds a couple of days before Christmas.

Autopsy to find out the cause of death showed significant blockage of a major artery of the heart. It's likely that he had a sudden irregularity of the heartbeat called ventricular fibrillation, causing the heart to stop. It's so sudden that there's no chance for him to be saved as he had saved a lot of lives in his brilliant career.

Our colleague's case is not an isolated one. Tens of thousands of Filipinos are dying annually because of fatal complications of cardiovascular disease. A good number of them die before they can even reach the hospital. They are usually proclaimed DOA (dead on arrival) when they're rushed to the emergency room.

Important risk factors

Hypertension and abnormal cholesterol levels remain two of the most important risk factors that cause progressive narrowing of the arteries called atherosclerosis. Abnormal cholesterol problems are now called dyslipidemia rather than hypercholesterolemia, because it does not only consist of an elevated bad cholesterol (LDL-cholesterol) and triglycerides, but also of a low level of good cholesterol (HDL-cholesterol).

The atherosclerotic process, accelerated by risk factors, slowly deprives the vital organs (heart, brain and kidneys) of oxygen and other essential nutrients, making them falter and subsequently fail. The individual eventually dies.

Atherosclerosis is still a diagnostic and therapeutic challenge. It's like a puzzle with still missing parts. But modern science, by virtue of the breakthrough researches that have yielded astounding results over the last decade, has gradually provided some of the missing parts. It's just a matter of putting them in the right links.

Multispecialty approach

Since atherosclerosis is a medical problem that practically involves all the organs of the body, its management may also require a multispecialty approach. Hence, for 12 years now, the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and the Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society (PLAS) have been organizing a joint annual convention to discuss new trends in the management of patients with various risk factors and clinical manifestations of atherosclerosis.

Both societies consist of the country's cardiologists, neurologists, endocrinologists, nephrologists, general internists and other specialists treating patients with atherosclerosis. Twenty-two other organizations of allied professionals are also closely collaborating with PSH and PLAS and are participating in the convention.

"We hope to build strong partnerships and fortify professional networks in the prevention and care of cardiovascular disease," says Dr. Nelson Abelardo, PSH president. For several years now, the PSH and PLAS have been reinforcing health initiatives that are effective in the local population.

Treatment guidelines

The scientific discussions will also review all researches and completed clinical trials during the past year. These are the basis of treatment guidelines which provide guidance to practicing physicians on scientific evidence-based management approaches for their patients. "But we have to find the balance between the guidelines and the realities of local clinical setting," explains Dr. Ruby Go, PLAS president.

This year's convention is going to be held from Jan. 31 to Feb. 2 at the Crowne Plaza Galleria. The convention scientific theme is "Decision-making in Hypertension and Dyslipidemia Prevention and Intervention in Specific Populations."

Medical residents and other doctors, who are currently in a training program, may register for free. Patients and individuals with risk factors may also register for free in the lay forum intended for them. Call the secretariat at 687-7073, 687-2841, 631-7970 or 0917-625-5810.

Hopefully, modern medicine can provide us the necessary technology to catch the "thief in the night" before he could steal our health and life.

Are you at risk of diabetes?

DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY HISTORY OF diabetes? Do you experience frequent hunger, thirst and urination? Do you have a sedentary lifestyle and don't have time for exercise or other physical activities?

These are just some of the questions asked in a healthy lifestyle survey from Abbott Laboratories designed to assess the risks an individual faces of having diabetes, currently one of the world's leading diseases that when left untreated can lead to more serious illnesses and even death.

While the questions appear deceptively simple, the repercussions of not knowing whether you are at risk or not are too great to ignore, according to Dr. Bienvenido V. Tianco, medical director of Abbott Nutrition International.

"Today's lifestyles make Filipinos increasingly susceptible to diabetes, especially Type 2 diabetes which is prevalent among those who are 40 years and older," he said. "That is why it is important to detect as early as possible whether an individual is at risk and if so,

to make the necessary changes in their diets and lifestyles."

Healthy lifestyle survey

Aside from family history and sedentary lifestyle, Dr. Tianco advises individuals to check the healthy lifestyle survey to determine whether they are at risk of diabetes:

1. Do you experience drastic weight loss without trying to in the past month?
2. Are you a mother who had given birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds?
3. Are you 40 years old or older?
4. Are you overweight or obese?
5. Do you have high blood pressure?
6. Do you have numb or tingling feet?
7. Have you been previously identified as borderline or with high blood sugar?
8. Are you usually tired for no apparent reason?

If you answered yes to only one of the questions, you are at low risk of having diabetes. If you answered yes to between two and four, you are at moderate risk and are advised to observe dietary and lifestyle changes. However, if you answered yes to between five and eight of the questions, you are at high risk of having diabetes and are advised to immediately seek medical advice or consult a health care provider for prompt management.

For further information on diabetes and nutritional assessment, you may call Abbott's diabetes hotline at 689-0444 in Metro Manila, or the national toll-free hotline at 1-800-108-433-427. The hotlines are manned by registered nutritionists-dietitians from Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

9th Asian Oceanian Congress on Child Neurology

ON JAN. 24-27, THE CHILD NEUrology Society of the Philippines (CNSP), together with the Philippine Neurological Association and the Asian and Oceanian Child Neurology Association, will hold the 9th Asian Oceanian Congress on Child Neurology at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu. The theme for the congress is "Building Bridges in the Practice of Child Neurology."

The congress aims to propel the concern for child neurology and developmental disabilities in children and to address issues and concerns regarding the practice of child neurology in the Philippines and help families from every social class to deal with neurological and developmental disabilities and problems of children.

Speakers

Congress speakers include Prof. Cornelio Banaag (Philippines) on ADHD; Peter Camfield (Canada) on Febrile Convulsions; Gregory Pastores (USA) on Genetics and Childhood Neurological Conditions; and Prof. Masaya Segawa (Japan) on tics and Tourett syndrome.

Twenty-three symposiums, two teaching courses and three lay forums have been put together by the Child Neurology Society Philippines Inc. and the Philippine Neurological Association, which are jointly hosting the four-day event.

For more details please visit the website at www.aoccn2007.org or call the AOCCN secretariat at 723-3337 or 723-0101 local 5006.

I can't always prevent her from making mistakes. But I can certainly advise her about those which may have deadly consequences.

Today's young generation can acquire a virus that can lead to **cervical cancer.**
G.U.A.R.D. against it.

Gather information. Millions of young women may acquire a virus they don't even know about. It's called Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and certain types can cause cervical cancer.[1,2] Find out more. Call hotline numbers 878-6338 or 1-800-1-888-6737 for inquiries.

Understand the risks for acquiring the HPV infection that can lead to cervical cancer and be in a better position to discuss the disease with your daughter.

Acknowledge the truth. In the Philippines, cervical cancer was the second leading cause of cancer death in women in 2004.[3] In 2005, 7,277 new cases and 3,807 deaths due to cervical cancer were estimated to have occurred (approximately 10 Filipino women deaths each day due to cervical cancer).[3]

Reach out to other mothers. You can help prevent the development of cervical cancer or better yet help protect other people's daughters by spreading this information.

Discuss prevention. Your Ob-Gynecologist or your daughter's Pediatrician can discuss ways to help prevent cervical cancer.

References:
[1] Uterine Cancer in: Harrison's Internal Medicine 2006, accessed online at http://www.accessmedicine.com
[2] Pagliusi S. WHO-Vaccine Research and Development. Downloaded from http://www.who.int/vaccines/en/hpvrd.shtml
[3] Laudico A, Esteban D, Redaniel T et al. Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates 2005. Publication by the Philippine Cancer Society, Inc.

MOMS ON G.U.A.R.D.
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Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Rd., South Superhighway, Taguig City

52nd TESDA Board Meeting
26 October 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City

Resolution No. 2006-22

APPROVING AND PROMULGATING THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR SLAUGHTERING OPERATIONS NCII, AUTOMOTIVE BODY PAINTING/FINISHING NCI AND AUTOMOTIVE BODY PAINTING/FINISHING NCIII, CONSTRUCTION PAINTING NCII, CONSTRUCTION PAINTING NCIII, PLUMBING NCI, PLUMBING NCIII, SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NCI, SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NCIII, AND SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NCIV

WHEREAS, during 16th and 17th Standard Setting and Systems Development TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 22 August 2006 and 26 September 2006, respectively, the following training regulations were deliberated and favorably recommended to the Executive Committee – TESDA Board for consideration and endorsement to the TESDA Board for approval:

Processed Food and Beverages Sector
Slaughtering Operations NCII

Automotive Sector
Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCI
Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCIII

Construction Sector
Construction Painting NCII
Construction Painting NCIII
Plumbing NCI
Plumbing NCIII

Metals and Engineering Sector
Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCI
Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIII
Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIV

WHEREAS, the Technical Experts have endorsed for promulgation the aforementioned Training Regulations;

WHEREAS, during the 46th Executive Committee-TESDA Board Meeting held on 19 October 2006, the results of the deliberation of the training regulations were presented and favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the TESDA Board;

WHEREAS, in the 52nd TESDA Board Meeting held this 26 October 2006, TESDA Board agreed and approved the Training Regulations for Slaughtering Operations NCII, Automotive Body Painting/ Finishing NCI and Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCIII, Construction Painting NCII, Constructing Painting NCIII, Plumbing NCI, Plumbing NCIII, Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCI, Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIII, and Shielded Metal Arc Welding NCIV;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves and promulgate the aforementioned Training Regulations.

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and Training Regulations (TR) be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 26th day of October 2006.

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–Jan 12 & 13, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

TIMELINE FOR PHILIPPINE ENERGY CONTRACTING ROUNDS (PECR) 2006

December 22, 2006	Official Announcement for PECR 2006
December 30, 2006	Publication of PECR circular (DC 2006-12-0014)
	Notice of Timelines of PECR 2006
January 8, 2007	Start of Acceptance of Proposals
May 30, 2007	Last Day of Acceptance of Proposals (1200 hrs., Philippine Time)
May 31, 2007	Opening of Proposals (1000 hrs., Philippine Time)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
PHILHOTEL.COM CORPORATION LG-01 Makati Palace Hotel, P. Burgos St., Makati City	Jaehyang Lim	Airline Ticket Reservation Manager
COSMO MEDICAL INC. Lot 64-A Celery Rd., FTI Complex, Taguig City	Sang Hoon Lee	Finance Manager
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ 7/F, JGC Phils. Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Takashi Yamaguchi	Senior Process Engineer
CJ GLS PHILIPPINES, INC. 6/F, Builders Centre, 170 Salcedo St., 1229 Legaspi Village, Makati City	Nae Seok Jeong	Managing Director
SUMITOMO CORPORATION 35/F, Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Koichiro Ono	Department Manager
OHSUNG TRAVEL AND TOURS AGENCY, INC. Unit 13-8137 Plaza J, Escriva Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hee Jung Jang	Marketing Supervisor
OHSUNG TRAVEL AND TOURS AGENCY, INC. Unit 13-8137 Plaza J, Escriva Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Myunghee Min (w/o Bae)	Adviser
SECRET RECIPES FOOD CORP. 70 Panalturan St., Manresa, DI, Quezon City	Hung Sau Law	General Manager
SYCIP, GORRES, VELAYO & CO. 6760 Ayala Avenue, 1226 Makati City	Yohko Tsuge	Associate Director
VERIZON COMMUNICATIONS PHILS. Citibank Centre, 8741 Villar St. cor. Valero St., Bel-Air, Makati City	Maria Lorena Lopez	Network Operations Staff Consultant
COMPASS MANA TOURS CORP. 8/F, Marc 2000 Tower, 1973 San Andres St., Malate, Manila	Mi Jung Kim	Assistant Operation Manager
COMPASS MANA TOURS CORP. 8/F, Marc 2000 Tower, 1973 San Andres St., Malate, Manila	Jung A Choi	Assistant Finance Manager
MOMENT INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, INC. 5/F, Fortune Office Bldg., 160 Legaspi St., San Lorenzo Village, Makati City	Lee Boon Ming	Chairman
21ST CENTURY MANAGEMENT AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES INC. L13, B4, John St., Multinational Village, Parañaque City	Richard Kenji Owyang	Managing Director
YOOHAN TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. Unit T. The Blue Wave, Pres D. Macapagal Blvd. cor. EDSA Extn., Pasay City	Wonjae Lee	Assistant Finance Manager
PHILINBEST INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES INC. 4/F Renaissance Towers, Meralco Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Daewoog Kan	President & Chief Executive Officer
PHILINBEST INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES INC. 4/F Renaissance Towers, Meralco Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Houan Kuk Ji	Vice President

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI - Jan. 13, 2007)

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC
This is to let the public know that International Healthcare Trends Nursing Training Center, a POEA licensed landbased company with License No. 060-LB-062306-PL has changed its name to International Healthcare Trends Recruitment Center, per DTI Certificate No. 00276668 The same address will be retained
Rm 103, 2/F NEW WORLD BUILDING, MORAYTA COR. P. PAREDES STS. ESPAÑA, MANILA
Telefax (02) 733-1808/
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Alumni Homecoming
The UST College of Nursing Class '57 will hold its Golden Jubilee Alumni Homecoming from Jan. 26 to 28, 2007.
You are cordially invited!
For more details, you may call Donna at 634-7570 or 634-7571

ATTENTION!!!
Calling all Alumnae of
Our Lady of Loreto College!!!
Our reunion / homecoming will be on Sunday, Jan. 14, 2007 at Stella Maris College.
Lots of fun, surprises, and prizes are stored for you.
Please join us and reminisce the good old days with our former classmates, advisers, sisters and teachers.
Registration is at 8 a.m., followed with a mass.
For information please call the following:
Ann Foz - 7423201;
Josie Balbido-8090724;
Virgie Mendoza - 7160926;
Violy Moneda-7346269.

BalikPINAS offers free seminars

A LEADING GLOBAL COOPERATIVE of overseas Filipinos, *balikbayans* and professionals in the Philippines and abroad, *BalikPINAS* is holding its mega launch and expo on Jan. 13 to 14, at Megatrade Hall 2, 5/F Bldg. B, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. There will be a series of free seminars, talks, counseling sessions and business opportunities for families and friends of overseas Filipinos and professionals here and abroad. Admission is free.

The mega launch and expo shall precede other exciting projects of this global cooperative, including trade fairs and assemblies in key provinces and cities and in the USA, UK, Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore, for the benefit of Filipinos overseas and their families.

BalikPINAS is a nontraditional, mainstream cooperative founded by reputable overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), *balikbayans*, and their friends and relatives in the Philippines. Inspired by successful cooperatives in other countries, the mission of *BalikPINAS* is to provide personal, professional, and social services to members and related markets, as well as to promote entrepreneurship and love of country.

Invited to grace the opening rites on Jan. 13, are POEA Administrator Rosalinda D. Baldoz, Mandaluyong City Vice-Mayor Jessie Cruz, movie and TV star Lorna Tolentino lead the ribbon-cutting and opening ceremonies on Jan. 13. Also invited are key national and local government officials, heads of non-government organizations, and private sector organizations, including Ecop, PMAP, AMCHAM, and PCCI.

The two-day affair is being held mainly for the benefit of OFWs, *balikbayans*, Filipino professionals, their families and friends. Among the free seminars are "Career Opportunities for Returning and Retiring Filipinos Overseas", Setting Up a Viable Family Business for Dependents and Families of Overseas Filipinos", "Avoiding Frauds and Scams in Investing", "Myths and Facts about Dual Citizenship" and "BalikPINAS as Mechanism for Self-Sufficiency."

This is co-presented by PLDT Budget Card and PLDT Pwede Card. This is brought to you by JobsDB.com, 88DB.com, Ford Motors, Landco Pacific, Manila Bulletin, Enchanted Kingdom, and Forever Flawless, in cooperation with the Century Properties, POEA, DOT, DOH, ABS-CBN, Manila Times, Business World, UNTV, Buhay Pinoy RPN9, Business Mirror, CBCP-ECMI, Asian Spirit, Staff Search Asia, Clinica Manila, Channel 5 (May Business Ako), C2, Philam Life, Godspeed Exhibits Systems, PLDT My DSL, SM Megamall, and Megatrade Hall.

Interested parties can *contact BalikPINAS at telefax number (632) 636 6099 or log on to its official Web site, http://www.balikpinas.com.ph.*

2nd Auto Review 10KRoad Safety Run

THE AUTO REVIEW 10K RUN FOR ROAD Safety and Courtesy is steadily gaining support from corporate sponsors as the advocacy run nears its staging on Jan. 28 at The Fort Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, Metro Manila.

Ford Group Phils, Toyota Motor Phils, Isuzu Phils Corp, Honda Cars Phils, Mitsubishi Motors Phils, Nissan Motor Phils, Suzuki Phils and Volvo, known for their own road safety campaigns, have pledged to support the second staging of this event which attracted thousands of participants on its maiden year in 2004.

Asahi Glass Phils, San Miguel Corp, Accel Sports Gear, Manila North Tollways Corp, Nite Gear of Banfu Corp, Video Sonic and Air Media Digital Merchandisng are likewise, supporting this multi-category race which features the 10K run for men and women, 5K for sponsors and media practitioners and 3K for children aged 12 years and below.

Now on its 13th year on the air, Auto REVIEW, a motoring and travel show telecast on IBC 13 every Saturday from 4:30-5:00 pm and hosted by sportscaster and motoring journalist Ron de los Reyes has embarked on an advocacy campaign in 2004 to promote public awareness on road safety.

Registration is going on at no. 5 Agusan St., Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City with contact nos: 742-0283/ 742-3091 (telefax); mobile no: 0905-8235292 and email at autoreview10krun@ gmail.com. Registration fee of P200 comes with a first of its kind Auto Review reflectorized runner's vest.

Spirit of Love 16th national grand reunion

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE CATHOLIC COMMUnity will have its 16th Grand Reunion at The Lakeshore Bird Air Tent on Km. 71 North Luzon Expressway, Mexico, Pampanga. The celebration started yesterday afternoon with a Healing Mass concelebrated by Bishop Jesus Cabrera and Fr. Theo Rustia, bonfire, fellowship, cultural presentation, and camping. Today, 13 January 2007 will be a whole day affair which will start with a registration at 7AM. It will be a day of Praise and Worship and Chapter Presentations. Bishop Pablo David, Fr. Deo Galang, Fr. Mar Ladra and Fr. Theo Rustia will concelebrate a mass. "We are inviting all members of the Spirit of Love Catholic Community to come. Admission is free. We are providing a free shuttle service from Carworld along Olongapo-Gapan Road and on Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga, as well," Architect Nestor S. Mangio, presiding elder of the Metro Angeles chapter proclaimed.

The Board of Trustees, Staff and Students of

LICEO DE SAN JACINTO FOUNDATION, INC. (LSJFI)

bid farewell to

its beloved former President, Treasurer, Comptroller and Dean of Education

CRISPINA ALCANTARA MOYA

and condole with her husband **Orlando**; children **Jose Roland**, **Janet**, **Crisor** & **Sonia**; grandchildren **Cristel**, **Mark**, **Anita Sandra**, **Crisedale** and **Marthanne**; only surviving sister **Segundina**; and relatives.

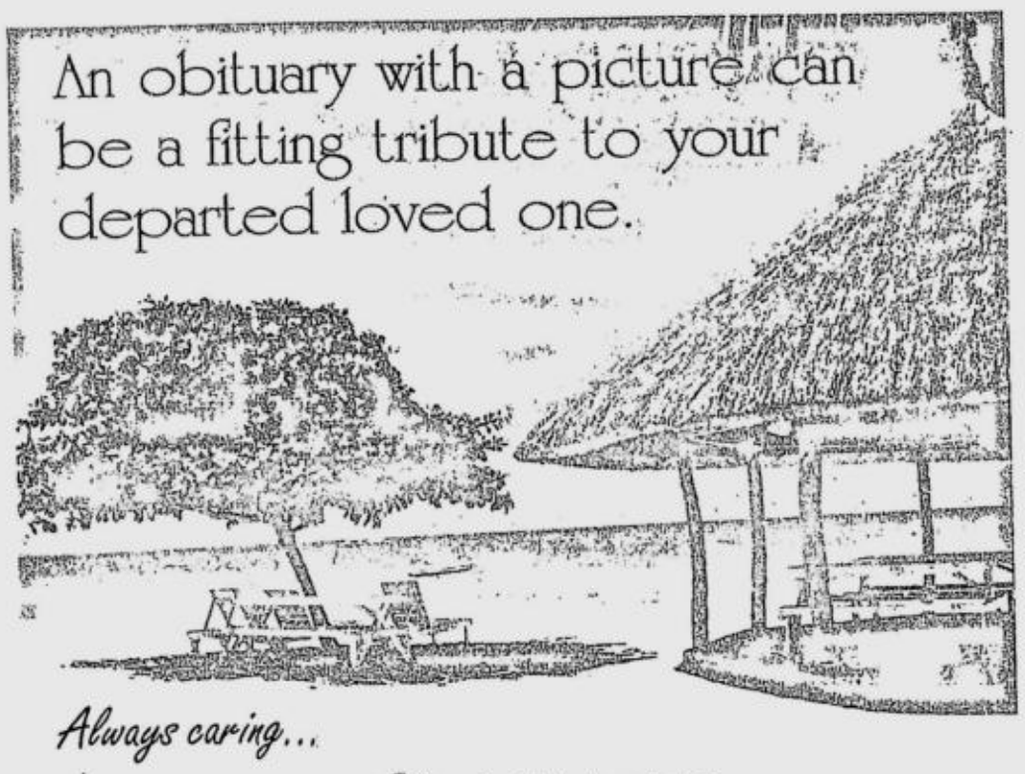
She passed away on 11 January 2007 at the age of 77.

Her remains lie in state at Capilla D, Arlington East, The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Ave., cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel, Pasig City, and then will be transferred to San Jacinto, Masbate on 15 January 2007.

Interment will be on Saturday, 20 January 2007, at the San Jacinto Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. necrological services and requiem mass.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made for the establishment of a Foundation to honor her memory and in support of the needs of the pupils of LSJFI-Elementary Department.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.



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INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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"Goodness and kindness will follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" – **Psalm 23:6**

Aniceta Martinez Vicente

Gintong Ina, 1988 and
Outstanding Mother of Makati, 1995
of Poblacion, Makati City and Dulag, Leyte

Peacefully joined our Creator on January 11, 2007 at the age of 85.

She is a loving wife to **Cesar Calpo Vicente**....
....a model mother to **Dr. Gil** and **Cecilia Vicente**, **Leticia** and **Conrado** (†) **Abarra**, **Lorna** and **Klaus Heidenreich**, **Lucille** and **Alexander Lopez**, **Dr. Ma. Corazon** and **Bernard Quitay**, and **Ma. Teresa** and **Pedro Rosario, Jr.**
....a caring grandma to **Christine Marie**, **Robert Gil Michaelli**, **Laureen Gille**, **John Vincent**, **Condrad Gil**, **Kris**, **Frank Anthony**, **Easter Anne**, **Dennis**, **Anthony**, **Maricor**, **Theresa Marie** and **Angelica**.

She lies in state at Don Bosco Church, Makati City. Interment will be at the Heritage Cemetery, Taguig City on Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. after the Mass at St. Peter and Paul Parish Church, Poblacion, Makati City.

Mama,
Thank you for sharing your precious life with us. You taught us how to laugh and love life to the fullest. WE LOVE YOU MAMA. Forever, you will be missed!

CLASSIFIEDS

CDC
CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Office of the President
Republic of the Philippines
CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Clark Development Corporation , through its Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC), invites consultants to apply for eligibility and short-listing and if found eligible and short-listed, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	:	**Engineering Design Services for the SCTEX-Clark Logistic Interchange Project**
Brief Description	:	Detailed Engineering Design Services for the Spur Underpass and the Panday Pira Access Road
Approved Budget For the Contract	:	**Php 6,956,040.00**
Source of Funding	:	CDC Capital Expenditures Budget for CY 2007
Contract Duration	:	Two (2) Months

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Short-listing of eligible consultants will be done based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant, qualification of personnel and current workload. All eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist. The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE). Bids whose technical proposals pass the minimum technical rating of 50% shall have its financial proposals opened and evaluated. The technical proposal shall carry 70% weight in the bid evaluation.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility	Until January 19, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	January 13-19, 2007
3. Submission & opening of Eligibility Requirements	January 22, 2007, 10:00 a.m., OTS Conference Room

The Eligibility Screening Form will be available at 3rd Floor SBAC Secretariat Office, Bldg. 2125 E. Quirino Avenue corner C. P. Garcia Street, CDC Corporate Center, Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga, upon submission of a letter of intent, and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 1,000.00** to the CDC-Cashier. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office.

Bid Documents will be available only to short-listed bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 10,000.00** to the CDC-Cashier.

The Clark Development Corporation assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids. CDC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to contract of award, without thereby encountering any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

SBAC Secretariat
3rd Floor Bldg. 2125 E. Quirino Avenue
corner C.P.Garcia Street
CDC Corporate Center, CSEZ, Pampanga
Tel. No. (045)599-9000 local 744 /742
Fax No. (045)599-9000 local 743
e-mail: sbac@clark.com.ph
website: www.clark.com.ph

(Sgd) Ernesto S. Gorospe
SBAC Chairman

(PDI – January 13, 2007)

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City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA invites PhilGEPS registered contractors to apply for the following items

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Construction of Two (2) Storey Ten (10) Classroom School Building at Don Pablo Lorenzo Memorial High School, Sta. Maria	P7,840,060.64	Feb. 6, 2007 10:00 AM	Feb. 19, 2007 10:00 AM	P 3,000.00
2 Construction of Two (2) Storey Eight (8) Classroom School Building at Mana Clara L. Lobregat National High School, Divisoria	P5,857,978.55	Feb. 6, 2007 10:00 AM	Feb. 19, 2007 10:00 AM	P3,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting January 24 to February 2, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The last day of the submission of the accomplished eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on January 23, 2007; 12:00 noon in the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope; whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope. In the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at Telephone No. (062) 992-7763.

The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without threby uncurring any liability to the allected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 13, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
METROPOLITAN TUGUEGARAO WATER DISTRICT
2ND FLR. SUPERMARKET BLDG. A. BONIFACIO ST., TUGUEGARAO CITY
CAGAYAN VALLEY
TEL NOS (078) 844-8540; 844-1586; 846-0957
TELE FAX: (078) 844-8540
E MAIL ADDRESS: MTWD_05@YAHOO.COM

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Metropolitan Tuguegarao Water District. (MTWD) through its BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC) is inviting interested LWUA accredited suppliers/distributors/dealers to submit their bids for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of the following Pumping Equipment that comply with the specifications and subject to the conditions stated in the bid documents. Specifications are as follows:

LOT 1 - One (1) unit Submersible Pump, capable of delivering 50 LPS at 42.5M. TDH, (Total Dynamic Head), coupled with 50HP Submersible Motor.
LOT 2 - One (1) unit Brand New Diesel Electric Generator Set Standby Rating: 75KVA; 3-Phase; 1800RPM; Powered by Diesel Gendrive Engine Directly Coupled to AC Brushless Alternator.
LOT 3 - Three (3) units Brand New Distribution Transformer pole mounted, conventional type, 7620/13.2 Primary – 240/480V Secondary, Three Phase oil immersed self-cooled 60Hz.

Interested bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years, with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check or screening, as well are the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" check. The BAC will conduct post qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

Approved Budget for the Contract: Lot 1- Php1,500,000.00; Lot 2- Php 800,000.00; Lot 3- Php 330,000.00

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening bid security, Performance Security, Pre Bidding Conference Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Advertising period	January 13 to January 25, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	January 26, 2007; 2:00 PM at MTWD Office 2nd Flr. Supermarket Bldg. A. Bonifacio St., Tuguegarao City
3. Submission of Letter of Intent & Issuance of Bid Forms	January 29-31, 2007
4. Deadline for Submission of Bids	February 06, 2007 12:00 Noon
5. Opening of Bids	February 06, 2007 2:00 PM (MTWD) Office 2nd Flr. Sup. Mrkt. Bldg.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount for three (3) Lots; Lot 1 - Three Thousand, (Php 3,000.00) Pesos Lot 2 – One Thousand Five Hundred, (Php 1,500.00) & Lot 3 – Five Hundred, (Php 500.00) Pesos respectively to the Metropolitan Tuguegarao Water District Cashier.

The Metropolitan Tuguegarao Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid, and reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders.

Furthermore, the Metropolitan Tuguegarao Water District shall not assume any responsibility regarding erroneous interpretation or conclusion by the prospective or eligible bidder out of the data furnished by the procuring entity.

(Sgd.) LIBRADA B. DE LEON
BAC Chair

(PDI--Jan. 13 & 20, 2007)

PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
(Public Estates Authority)

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE VEHICLES

The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) is offering for sale, on an "as-is, where-is" basis, the following Unserviceable Vehicles:

1. Items for Sale

Item No.	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1	1995 Mitsubishi L-200 DiCab, Pick-up Diesel, Black	P 114,975.00
2	1993 Toyota Corona 2.0 4-door Sedan, Gas, Silver	90,480.00
3	1993 Toyota Corona 2.0 4-door Sedan, Gas, Gray	87,145.00
4	1992 Toyota Tamaraw FX HSPUR, Gas, Blue	47,125.00
5	1995 Toyota Tamaraw FX Wagon, Gas, Blue	43,746.00
6	1991 Toyota Lite Ace Commuter, Gas, White	36,226.00
7	1990 Kia Ceres 4 x 2 HSPUR Diesel, Red	52,700.00
8	1993 Honda Motorcycle 125cc Gas, Red	3,800.00
9	One (1) Lot Junk Unserviceable Motor Vehicles	39,000.00 /lot

2. Interested parties may obtain the Terms and Condition and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) starting January 16 to February 8, 2007 from 9:00 AM to 5:00PM at the Administrative Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati, MM.
3. The first pre-bid conference is scheduled on January 25, 2007 at 2:00PM at the PRA Conference Room.
4. Duly accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms and Conditions shall be submitted to the PRA Real Estates Bids and Awards Committee (PREBAC) on February 9, 2007 on or before 1:30PM. Public opening of bids shall follow at 2.00 PM of the same day.
5. PRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality found therein, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to its interest, without any obligation on the part of PRA to explain the reasons thereof.
6. In the event that the public bidding becomes a failure, the PRA reserves the right to accept proposals for the above items for sale.
7. For inquiries, please contact Engr. Danilo Almoite or Ms. Lilian Tabinga at telephone number 817-47-11 local 174.

MANUEL G. FRANCISCO
Chairman- PREBAC

(PDI–Jan. 13, 14 & 15, 2007)

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Healing Mass on TV ranks 8th!

It is no surprise that the Talitha Khum Healing Mass on TV, is on the top 8 of NBN Channel 4's most viewed programs as the mass addresses the increasing need of so many Filipinos for healing and forgiveness. As part of the St. Peter Group's Corporate Social Responsibility Program, the sponsored mass for over five years, espouses the advocacy of preparing for the inevitable realities of life by reaching out to the sick and heavily laden. The gifted and charismatic healer Fr. Joey Faller who comes all the way from the Diocese of Lucena administers the faith healing after the holy mass every Sunday. The mass is open to all those in need of spiritual healing in the privacy of their homes or at the NBN station at Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

Florita B. Vitangcol (Right), Chairman Emeritus of St. Peter Life Plan Inc. and Executive Producer of the Talitha Khum Healing Mass hosts every Sunday's healing ministry.

PAID ADVT.

BUSINESS

East Asia growth area leaders agree to expand air linkages

Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines sign MOU

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CEBU—LEADERS OF BRUNEI, INDONESIA, Malaysia and the Philippines have signed a memorandum of understanding that seeks to expand air links between the four countries.

The agreement will cover flights to and from Brunei's capital Bandar Seri Begawan, Balikpapan and Pontianak in Indonesia, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching in Malaysia and the cities of Davao and Zamboanga in the Philippines.

The MOU was adopted following the 3rd BIMP-East Asean Growth Area summit that President Macapagal-Arroyo chaired at the Mactan Island Shangri-La Hotel here.

The agreement was part of programs to spur economic growth in the growth area, which cover areas such as energy and customs, immigration and quarantine security.

The MOU allows the so-called "fifth freedom" traffic rights on airlines serving the airports of the seven sites.

Fifth freedom refers to the right to carry passengers from one's own country to a second country, and from that country to a third country.

The Philippines also yesterday urged other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to strengthen support for the sub-regional growth area, which is seen as crucial for the stability of Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific as well.

Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo had told the Asean-Japan Ministerial Meeting held Thursday night that Tokyo's interest to become a BIMP-Eaga development partner promised fresh growth opportunities for such a strategic area.

Aside from Asean and Japan, BIMP-Eaga parties had linked with the government of Australia, which sees enhanced trade between its Northern Territory and the growth area as a test-bed for an Asean-Australia-New Zealand free trade area.

After two years of conceptualization, BIMP-Eaga was formalized in 1994 in a meeting of Asean senior officials and ministers held in Davao City.

BIMP-Eaga covers the entire Brunei Darussalam; Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku and Irian Jaya in Indonesia; Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan in Malaysia; and Mindanao and Palawan in the Philippines.

Immediately after the growth area's launch, the Asian Development Bank conducted an exhaustive investigative study on the growth potentials of the sub-region that initially identified areas of cooperation.

These areas were grouped into four including the cluster—of which the Philippines is the lead country—on small and medium enterprise development, and capital formation and financial services, and CIQS.

The other cluster are those on transport and infrastructure development (Brunei); natural resources (Indonesia); and joint tourism development (Malaysia).

A fifth cluster on human resources development and people mobility cut across the four major groupings.

Government debt at ₱3.91T as of Oct. 2006

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S OUTSTANDING debt as of October last year dipped by a slight 0.4 percent to P3.914 trillion from the previous month's P3.928 trillion, partly due to the strengthening of the peso.

If divided among the 85 million Filipino citizens, each will have a share of about P46,047 of the government's debt burden.

Contingent liabilities, or debts incurred by state-owned firms that carry a sovereign guarantee, reached P546 billion in October, P7 billion less than the P553 billion recorded as of end-September.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the decline in the government's debt was largely attributed to the appreciation of the peso and debt swaps.

In October, the peso averaged at 50.0038 against the US dollar, slightly stronger than the 50.4012 recorded in September.

An appreciation of the peso makes the government's foreign-denominated debts cheaper in peso terms.

In doing debt swaps, the government taps the capital market to borrow at lower cost, and use the proceeds to pay off maturing obligations with higher interest rates.

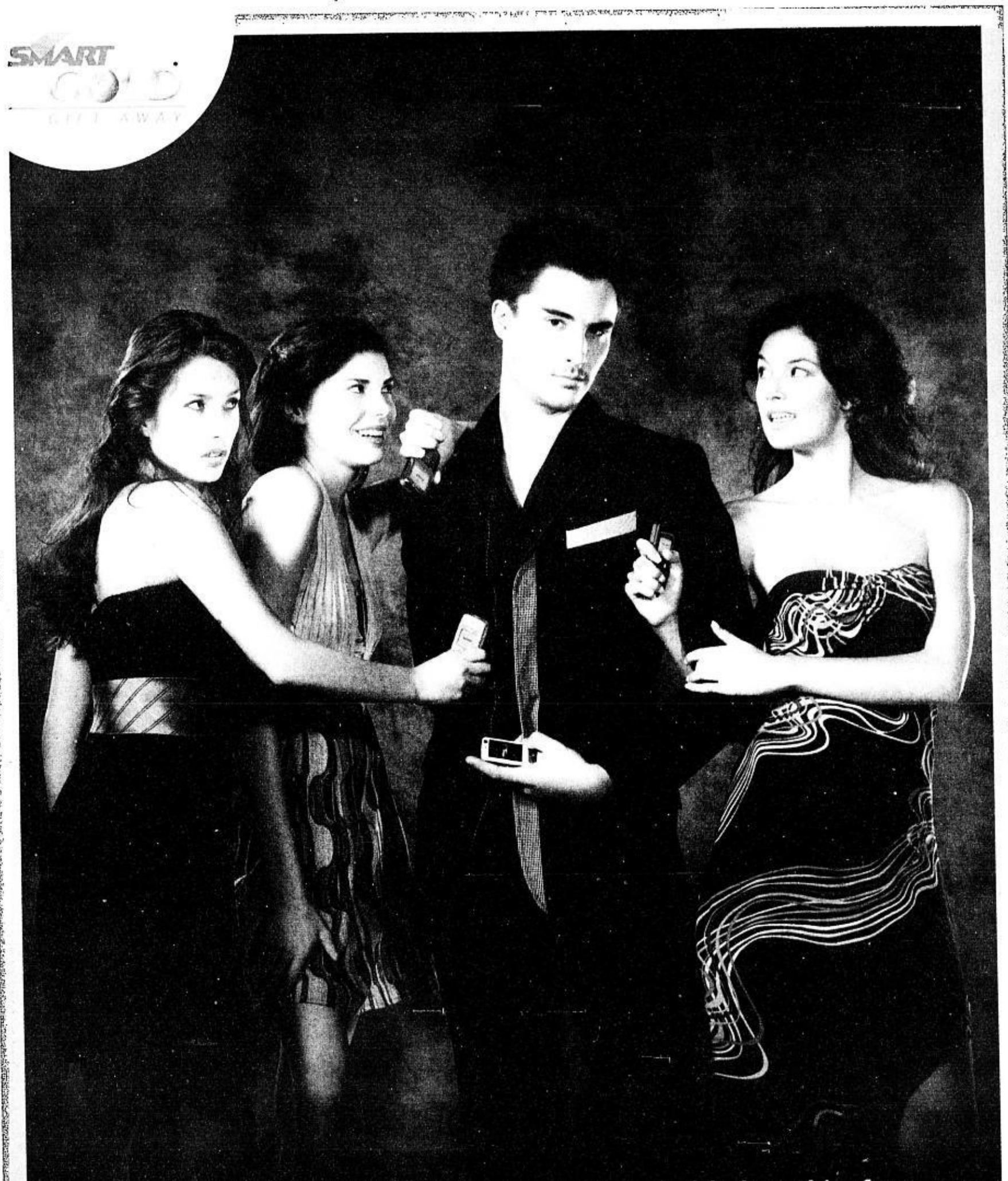
This effectively trims down the outstanding debt, Cruz said.

Of the October debt of P3.914 trillion, P2.17 trillion was owed to domestic creditors and P1.744 trillion to foreign lenders.

Because foreign borrowings expose the borrower to foreign exchange risks, which could further bloat its debts, the government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from domestic credit sources.

The government borrows domestically through the issuance of Treasury bills and bonds.

Foreign borrowings are done either through the flotation of sovereign bonds in the international capital market or undertaking of official development assistance.



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PROPERTY

Emerging property trends in 2007

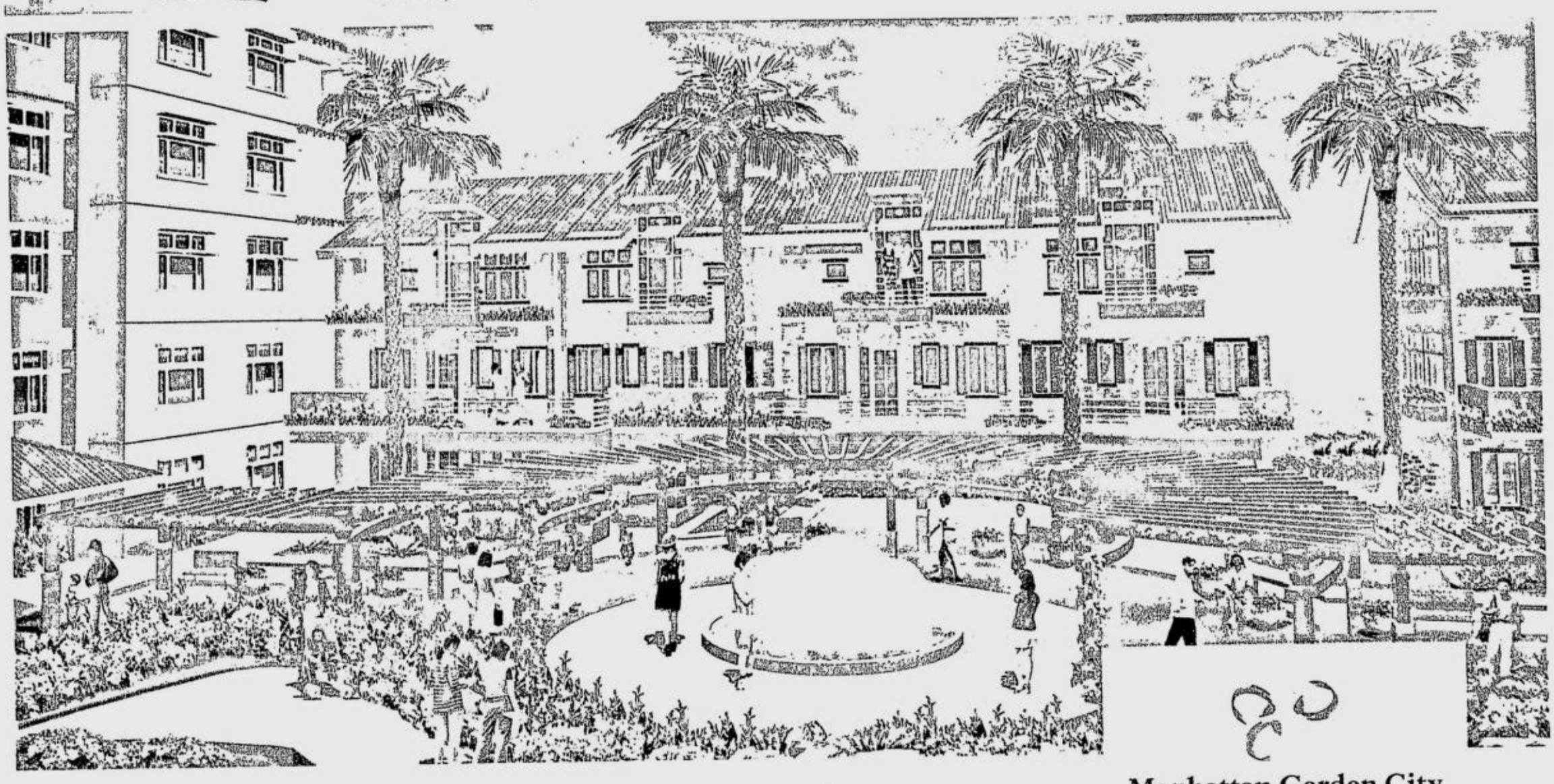
By Tessa R. Salazar

WILL OVERSEAS-BASED buyers continue their buying spree this year, or will local and national elections spoil all the fun? Will more malls sprout on the fringes of Metro Manila this year? Will plans toward developing functional "retirement villages" stay on the drawing boards?

INQUIRER Property recently asked local property players the emerging and "breakout" trends that would spur further developments in 2007.

Eric Soriano, ERA Philippines country president and CEO, predicts that remittances will continue to grow. He stressed that real estate purchases from OFWs have contributed close to 25 to 30 percent of the annual sales of big

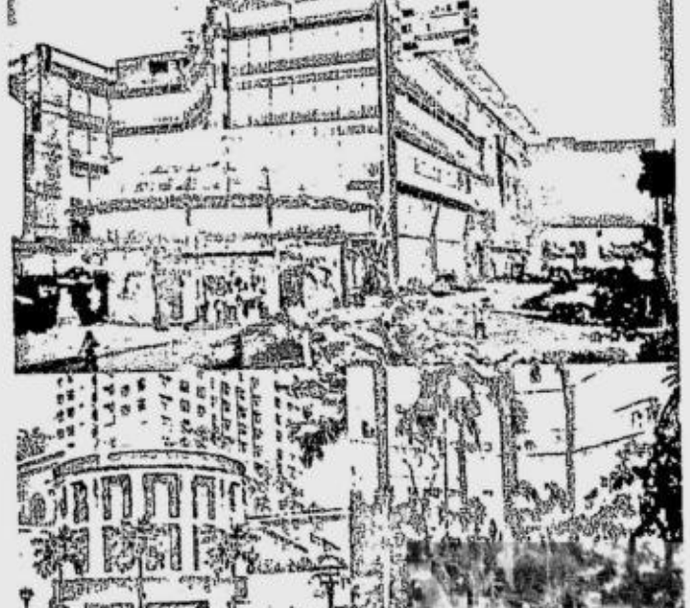
EMERGING/ B2-2

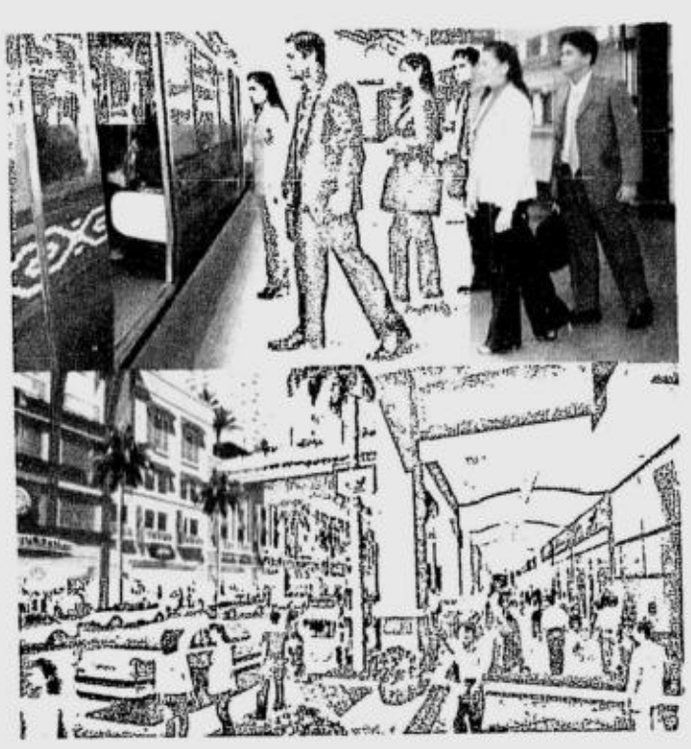


Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER

A Matchless Location at the Metro's Center.

Go from home to the heart of the action in no time. At Manhattan Parkway, the first phase of Manhattan Garden City, enjoy the benefits of living in the country's first-ever transit-oriented development. Experience the freedom to go places with utmost ease via the LRT-2 and MRT-3. And reach the north, east, west and south sides of Metro Manila in one go. What's more, be a walk away from the Araneta Center and its shops, offices, restaurants and entertainment hubs.





Surrounded by the city's key destinations.

Your Parkway home is encircled by everything the city has to offer. And you're just a train ride away from it all. Walk down an exclusive **729-meter-long garden footbridge** four stories above street level. Take in its park-like scenery. And arrive at the LRT-2 and MRT-3 stations safely and without the hassles of traffic.

From the LRT-2 along Aurora Boulevard, Ateneo and UP in Quezon City and Manila's university belt are just minutes away. The MRT-3 along EDSA brings Makati, Ortigas and Taft Avenue within easy reach. Both lines join up with the LRT-1, making it easy to go anywhere from Monumento in Caloocan to Baclaran in Parañaque.

Surrounded by the Araneta Center's hot spots.

Be in the middle of a pulsating lifestyle and leisure center: the Araneta Center. From your home, a four-story **transfer station** with a hotel-style lobby, grand staircase and four passenger elevators brings you to the third level of Gateway Mall, which hosts the Oasis, a unique floating garden. From here, simply walk to the Araneta Coliseum. Or to Rustan's, SM, Shopwise, Ali Mall or Farmers Plaza.

Surrounded by the comforts of home.

When you're done exploring the world outside, your home is just a breath away. Whether it's an executive studio or one-bedroom suite, **Manhattan Parkway** offers you soothing views of the Araneta Center and Manila Bay. What's more, enjoy hours of active play at the fourth-level garden deck. There are trellised walkways, jogging trails, a fitness station, an indoor sauna/spa and a gym. And if that's not enough, a footbridge leads to more play amenities at the upcoming phases.

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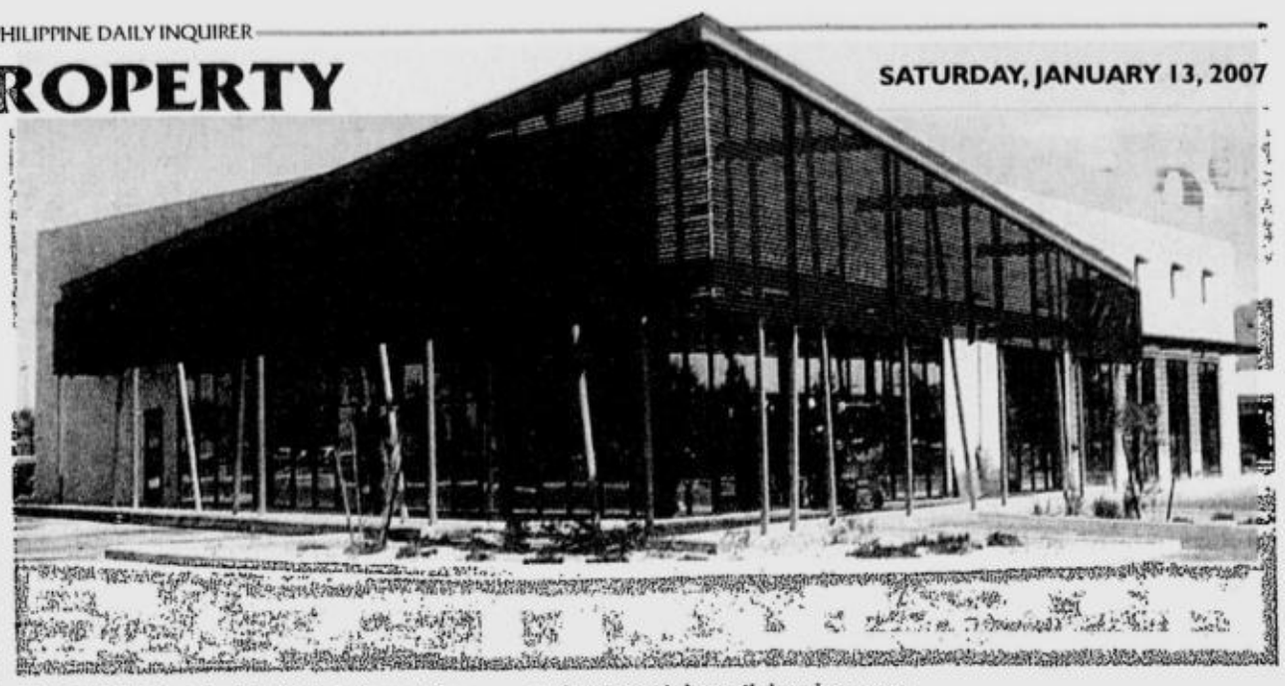
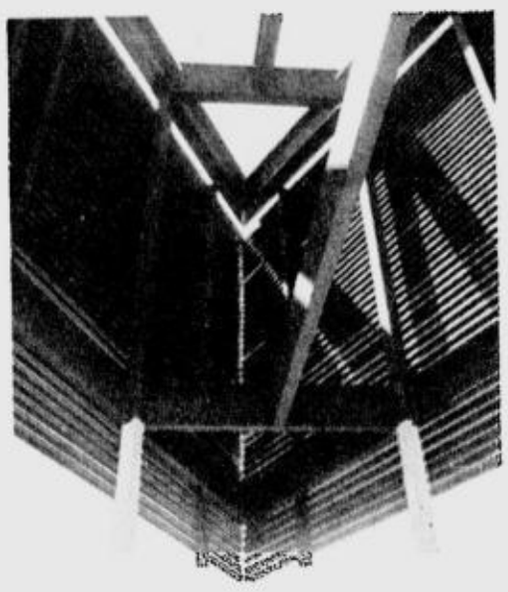
The rewards of being a mentor



"HER $4-M Sustainable Mall design at the upscale Arrowhead Towne Center in Glendale Arizona."



ONE OF THE REWARDING EXPERIENCES of my practice is to meet and work with people who carry with them a promise, a treasure of great possibilities.

Many of them enter my office right after graduation and some during the early part of their profession. So I consider this as a challenge and a responsibility as well to guide them in discovering their potentials and with training, develop them to full capacity.

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

One of these young apprentices is Anna Lira V. Luis, who had spent a considerable time being trained in our office, Architecture Network. After almost 10 years since she left to enter Taliesin, an architecture school of Frank Lloyd Wright, in Arizona, United Sates, there have been more and more reasons to be proud of her. And this is not only true for me to speak of, but also for our fellow Filipinos to cheer for. The recommendation letter I wrote for her future school then was but one of the vehicles of her entry. It was her qualities that won the scrutiny of the selection team.

Filipino apprentice architect

In 2000, she has been considered as the first Filipino apprentice architect. It was moving that she even took the detail of inviting me to her graduation.

Lira, as many familiarly call her, continues to practice the concept of mentoring through learning by doing. She carries this out whenever she gives speeches to major universities and organizations. She went back to the country a number of times to precisely do so and enrich the home ground with her Taliesin experience. Just last year she released her audio book "Frankly Speaking It's the Wright Way."

Advocacy

We can see her advocacy for a sustainable architecture in her $4-million sustainable mall design at the upscale Arrowhead Towne Center in Glendale, Arizona. It was designed with a tectonic shift from a quintessential retail development.

Lira once stated, "Architects have an increasing challenge to make communities more livable and sustainable, which are innately cross-disciplinary. We need to have an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving that enables us to understand our clients so we can educate them about the built environment.

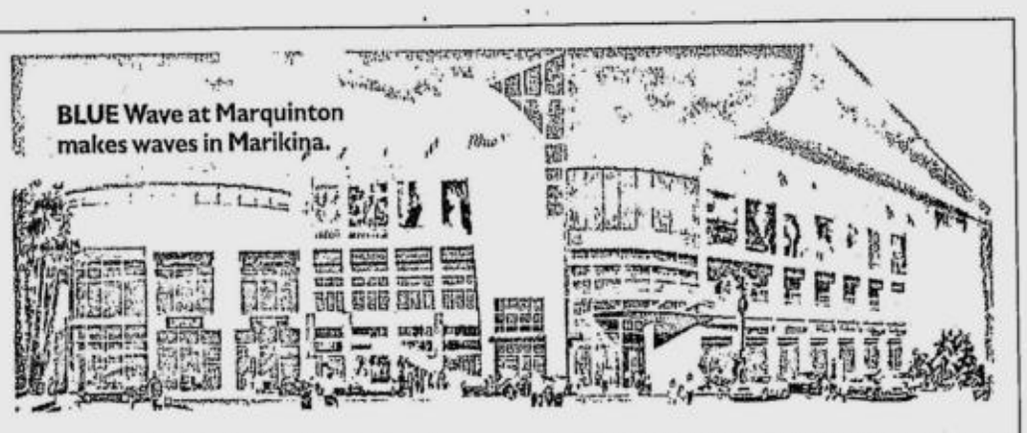
She now principals Atelier Lira Luis, LLC and has been recently appointed chair of the Digital Visualization component of Taliesin Fellowship.

In a personal sense, mentoring is as what Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe stated "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you may help them to become what they are capable of being." Moreover architects through their words and works, mentor a broad spectrum in society: from students, peers, to clients.

(Lira Luis is a Filipino architect based in the USA who has designed buildings for several of the Fortune 500 companies in the USA. She continues the tradition of mentorship via Atelier Lira Luis, LLC.)

LUIS

Blue Wave at Marquinton: Rising with Marikina



BLUE Wave at Marquinton makes waves in Marikina.

IT IS A CITY THAT'S SMALL IN SIZE, BUT big in accomplishments. It boasts of a highly skilled workforce and literate citizens. It is also well known for its discipline, cleanliness and overall rapid progress, such that it has consistently been given various recognitions and awards in the fields of enterprise, health, education and local governance.

It is Marikina City—a city that is currently known as the shoe capital of the Philippines for its world-class shoe industry, but is slowly carving a name for itself in terms of economic progress, community building and public service. Now, Marikina moves in a step closer to its dream of being a "Little Singapore" with the newest addition to its portfolio of commercial centers—the Blue Wave Mall.

One-stop shopping center

A pioneering project from Federal Land Inc., the property arm of the Metrobank Group, the Blue Wave Mall provides more than just the convenience of shopping malls. It also offers the leisure of an entertainment center with its four top-grade cinemas that's the first in the city of Marikina.

The Blue Wave Mall also serves as a one-stop shopping center for its neighboring community—the equally groundbreaking Marquinton condominium project, also by Federal Land.

Catering to the needs of both Marquinton Condominium's residents and those of the neighboring areas in Parang, Marikina, the Blue Wave Mall boasts of a wide range of shops and stores and an exciting array of dining options oriented toward the whole family. Choose from family favorites such as Max's, Kitaro, Big Buddha, or from fast-food staples such as Jollibee, KFC, Shakey's and Yellow Cab Pizza. Surf the Net at Rock Island Café. Have your pictures printed at Fuji or Kodak developing center. Have a great talk with a friend at Starbucks café or simply spend quality time with the kids at Timezone.

A PLACE to hangout with friends

Holistic contribution

Favorably located near medical facilities, banks, schools and public transport stations, Blue Wave Mall assures Marquinton and Marikina residents the utmost convenience in buying their daily needs. Moreover, residents will have more shopping choices by the second quarter of 2007 with the completion of Blue Wave Mall's additional phase which will house Robinsons Supermarket.

Accessible, complete and convenient, the Blue Wave Mall rises along with Marikina by its holistic contribution of providing not just commercial services, but also recreation facilities where families and the entire community can get together.

Home with a new hue

"MY PLACE LOOKS LIKE A BOdega! Do you mind?" Framelia "Fram" Anonas, a science journalist at the Department of Science and Technology and a freelance writer for health and lifestyle magazines, asks this question every time someone comes to visit.

Their home in San Joaquin, Pasig seemed like one huge storeroom. But all these changed when she and the whole family won a Christmas gift they have always wanted: a living room, dining room and kitchen makeover. Thanks to Real Living magazine and Handyman Do It Best Home Center (Handyman), among other sponsors.

Fram's wish

Fram wished for a sala set, an area rug and a real dining set. Her dream included a kitchen with a small refrigerator or an oven and really nice cupboards, not the crammed cabinet and lackluster linoleum that they had.

Aside from the lack of budget, Fram juggles her studies (she is taking up her master's degree in Development Communication), badminton, reading, freelance writing and attending to the family's needs sometimes all at once so there was not enough time to smarten up the place. But last Christmas, Fram and family got more than what they wished for.

Handyman replaced the linoleum with unique vinyl tiles that gave the impression of wood parquet. The shaky ceiling was next to go. Special plywood painted in white was placed to complement the modern hanging white ceiling lamp and the white drapes that created an illusion of height.

More alive

The living room became more alive when the once grayish walls were repainted with powder blue, courtesy of Handyman Do It Best Quality Paints, creating a harmonious blend with the cream sofa and some cushion pillows of earth colors of green-brown tones. A dark wooden coffee table accessorized with decorative green weeds all over the blue-gray area rug were all from Handyman.

A four-tiered bookshelf from Handyman did not only serve as a divider but also added homespun flavor. What used to be a storage area under the stairs now has a table, study chair and touch lamp from Handyman to complete a home-office workspace, homework zone, or an early-morning retreat.

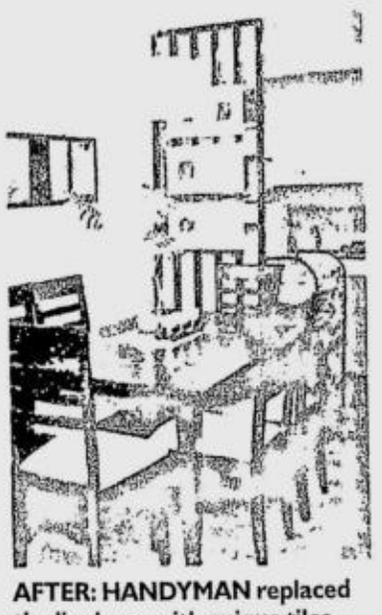
Dining area

The drab dining area now has a six-seater dark wood stylish dining table and chairs plus a panoramic mirror, while a wooden banister decked with family photos served as partition.

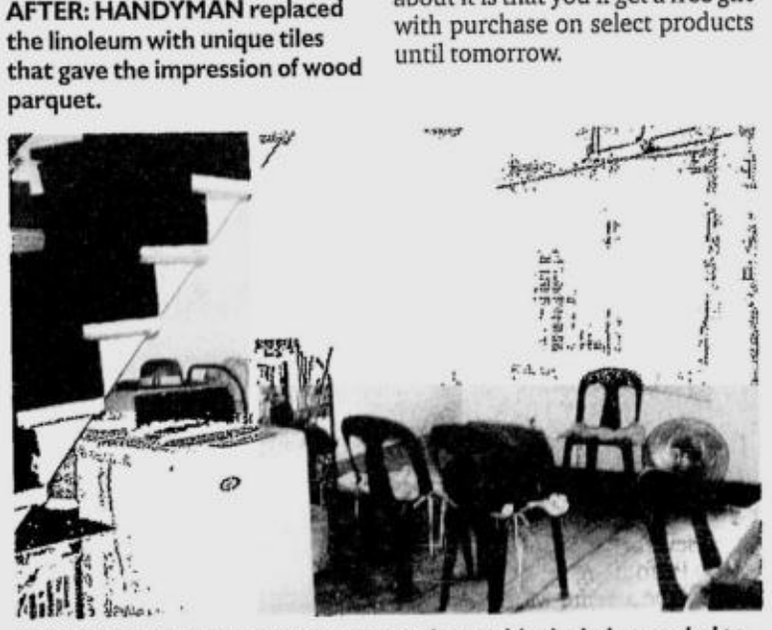
The kitchen looks warm but spicy with the tangerine-terra cotta combination tiles provided by Handyman. The area was reorganized. Carpentry and masonry materials from Handyman were used to refinish the classy kitchen cabinetry that matches the new microwave oven and refrigerator, all in stainless silver. Counter space was freed to accommodate more of the family kitchen activities.

"I love shopping at Handyman," Fram enthused. "Aside from the conveniently displayed quality merchandise, it has knowledgeable staffers who attend to every customer's need."

You still have the chance to shop for great holiday gift items at Handyman. And the best thing about it is that you'll get a free gift with purchase on select products until tomorrow.



AFTER: HANDYMAN replaced the linoleum with unique tiles that gave the impression of wood parquet.



BEFORE: THE LINOLEUM flooring and monoblock chairs needed to be replaced. The whole area was screaming for a makeover.

Emerging property trends in 2007

From page B2-1

property players, almost doubling the 15 percent contribution in 2005 by the offshore market. Dollar inflows are projected to hit an all-time high of more than $12 billion by yearend, $3 billion of which will be invested in real estate. ERA Real Estate is a multinational real estate service provider that manages Eastwood.

Kit Vergara, Philtown Marketing vice president, agreed with this observation.

"In the United States, if the interest rates are lowered, there will be a return to investing in the US market, thereby lowering their presence here. However, if inventory levels remain high in the United States, asset appreciation of units in Manila may be higher than those in the States," Vergara explains.

Joey Antonio of Century Properties Group says OFWs will remain strong as long as we continue to see more than 10 million (of them) working abroad.

"In fact, as years pass, the average income level increases as these workers go higher in the value chain, hence, they earn more the longer they stay abroad," he says.

Gibson Yu, GW Architects business development manager, says the stronger peso will be good for the OFW market. "The stronger peso shows stronger property value,"

Ino Lao, marketing director of Antel Land, says that with a stronger peso, the property market should all the more perform better since investors would rather put their money in property instead of speculating in foreign currencies.

Crown Asia president Jerry Navarette says the industry may even surpass its 2006 performance given the new and aggressive moves of its players (especially in the financing aspect). The thrust seems to lie in the effort to make more Filipinos capable of owning a home.

The condominium sector is seen to continue its tremendous growth. Navarette predicts that the Philippine property's "new and aggressive financing schemes will definitely be a strength it will bank on to drive the growth in 2007."

Vergara says that from a US perspective, Fil-Ams will still purchase in Manila provided developers are transparent and, "more importantly, they are offered a chance to earn more than investing in the States, e.g. asset appreciation."

Strengths and weaknesses

Vergara says there will be continued strength in the high-rise residential and office buildings. Horizontal projects will also continue to enjoy good sales, but the location of the projects will continue to be a key factor. Vergara says the few weaknesses of the property sector would lie in industrial and farm lots.

Antonio considers these among the industry strengths: banks awash with cash; foreign investors who have started looking at the Philippines again; and the continued strength of the OFW market.

Antonio adds that the BPO (business process outsourcing) market will demand new spaces that will strengthen the office rental and sale market.

"The Philippines is part of the whole Asian emerging market and will continue to attract capital from foreign investors. Low domestic lending rates, which is (now) in single digits and we have never before experienced, will expand the market tremendously," Antonio says.

Elections, politics

He foresees that politics will again play spoilsport.

Navarette agrees with Antonio, saying the Philippine property may be affected mainly by possible political problems brought about by the 2007 elections and the unending saga of Charter change.

Lao cites people's anxiousness of the election results as one impending weakness for the property industry. However, the real estate industry's new and innovative projects should keep the public's interest up, Lao says. The market is becoming intelligent, he notes, as "it starts scrutinizing products (even more closely)."

Soriano says there is an emerging trend toward the development of community malls and recreation and lifestyle centers.

"If you are not in the league of an SM, the key is to become a fully integrated retail player where you synergize entertainment, a wide array of restaurants and a complete tenant mix," he says.

Soriano adds that this is a pioneering concept similar to Eastwood City's "live, work, play model," where a "walkable" environment is at the core of the developmental landscape.

"Developers and marketers are now incorporating aspirational marketing in their game plans," he says.

Soriano predicts that in return, offshore buyers are now looking to purchase homes in new and quality developments in nearby provinces like Laguna and Cavite in the South and Bulacan and Pampanga in the north.

Aging population

He foretells the growth of specialty developments and "customized" developments for the aging population.

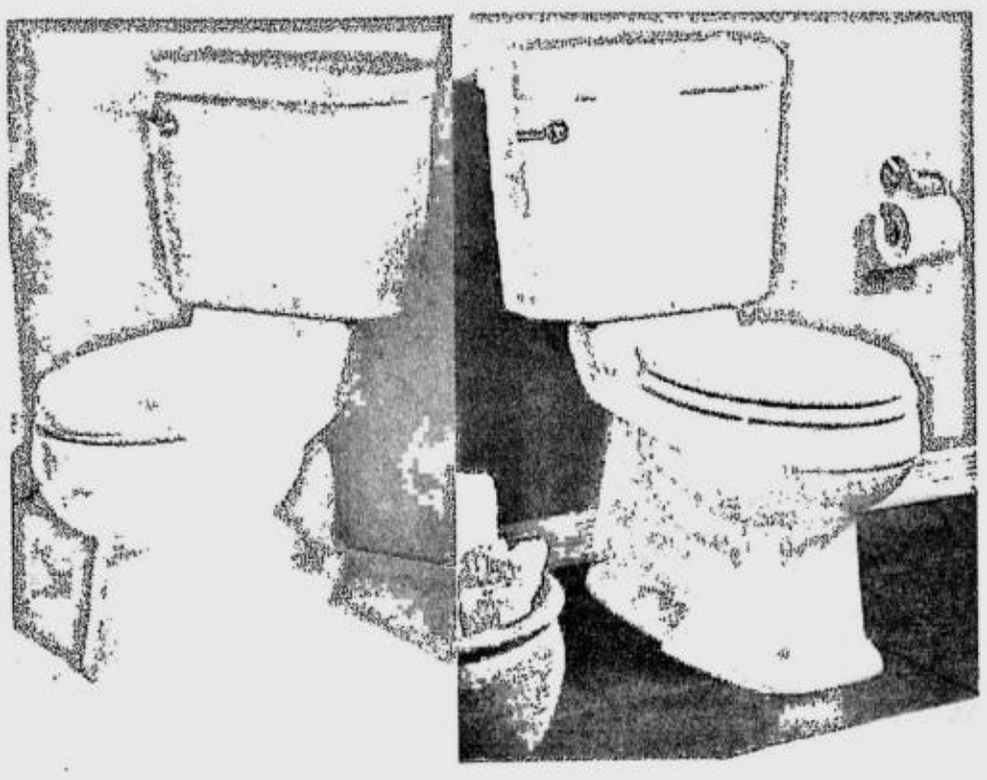
Soriano adds that the growth of the global aging population is expected to influence the way residential communities will be planned and developed in the Philippines.

"There is now a global expectation for developers interested to tap the retiree segment to incorporate standard metrics on the physical infrastructure (facilities and establishments) as well as the functional aspects (doctors on call, etc.) of managing a village development dedicated to the retirement market.

Lao likewise predicts a growth in this market, especially in the areas that offer medical or wellness packages.

"Considering that the country still enjoys a widely English-speaking population and a fairly low cost of living, this becomes an attraction for foreign retirees. Likewise, products for the expanded Filipino family, such as developments near the place of parents, schools or workplace, as well as fairly priced high-quality condominiums, will be a trend," Lao says.

Powerful toilet flushing system now in RP



THESE TWO new models from American Standard feature the revolutionary Champion flushing system.

By Charles E. Buban

JUST RECENTLY, American Standard Philippines introduced a revolutionary flushing system that virtually eliminates clogs, repeated flushing, overflows and expensive repairs.

Called Champion flushing system, the company said the new design in toilet would even allow household members to forget about plungers for good.

"American Standard completely redesigned the inside of the toilet to make flushing more efficient and virtually maintenance-free," promised American Standard Philippines county manager Lino Bernardo.

Toilet models Champion one-piece and Champion close-coupled elongated toilets will feature the latest flushing system.

Patented Flush Tower

Instead of using the typical toilet tank's floating ball-and-chain system, the Champion flushing system employs the patented Flush Tower that unleashes powerful water pressure to the bowl while using no more than six liters of water in less than a second.

"The system's extra large (24 percent larger than the industry norm of 72 mm) Flush Tower is computer modeled to maximize speed and volume at release and since it's made of high-tech polymer construction, it resists wear," explained Bernardo.

The design also eliminates the use of flapper, which is susceptible to corrosion, distortion and leakage. In its place is an automatic shutoff feature that seals tight using high-grade silicone, thus, minimizing water wastage.

Bernardo added that the system is complemented by a siphon trapway—the largest in the industry at 60 mm versus the standard 46 mm—that eliminates choke points, removing everything in the bowl in just a single flush.

The models that use the Champion flushing system also feature a unique under-rim channel that allows high flow rate and with its low resistance channel, allows the flowing water to effectively remove wastes.

Quiet operation

"Despite the fast and powerful pressure of water rushing to the bowl, the design has eliminated turbulence, thus allowing for a more quiet operation, no more of the sound one usually hears after using the toilet," Bernardo explained.

According to him, this will be extremely appreciated by individuals who would want to be discreet when using the bathroom.

"American Standard, being the world's largest producer of bathroom and kitchen fixtures and fittings, is always researching on better bathroom technology. The Champion flushing system is just among the many technologies that the company has developed through the years," Bernardo said.

The new toilet models also carry the company's patented Family Health technology that uses antibacterial glaze on its ceramic surfaces that effectively kills on contact *E. Coli*, staph as well as other harmful bacteria, thus protecting users from diseases that these organisms may cause.

Resistant to scrubbing and frequent use, Bernardo added that this antibacterial technology stays effective throughout the entire life cycle of the product.

Live like a king at Manhattan Garden City

AUTHOR CHASE ALEXANDER ONCE SAID, "A man's home is his wife's castle." If you are one of the few who really want to feel like a king or queen in your own private domain, then you can see your grand vision come to life at Manhattan Garden City.

The newly inaugurated 2-bedroom model unit at the Manhattan Garden City showroom within Gateway Mall gives investors and aspiring homeowners a preview of the regal lifestyle.

Sense of luxury

Upon entry, your sense of luxury will be heightened right away. The receiving area features a golden mirror, best for checking out your stately attire before you leave every morning. Beige and gold colors for the couches bring about a feel of elegance. The main table's accent piece—a lion king—perfectly resembles who you are.

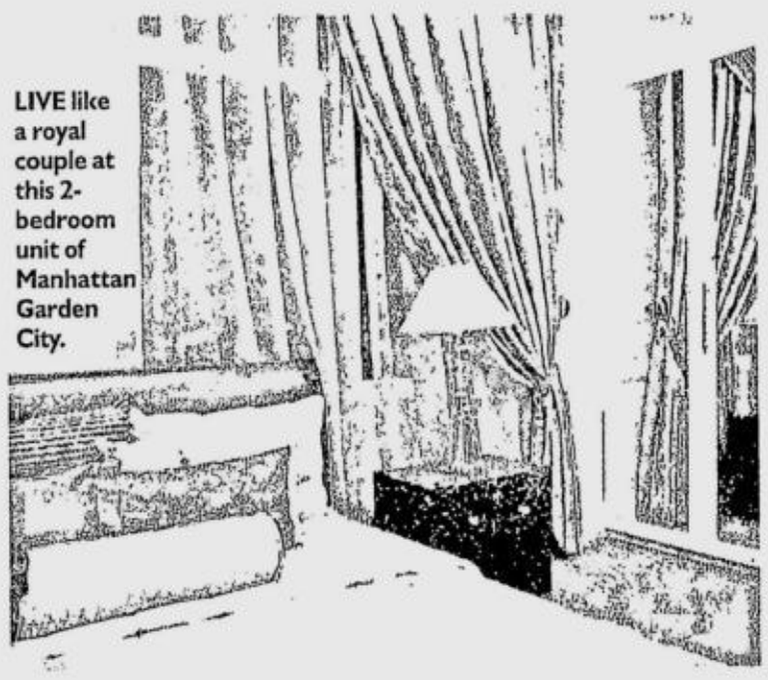
The dining area gives off a warm, splendid feel. Beige and light brown for the chairs exude a grand vibe, while the flowers at the centerpiece will definitely make dining a pleasure. From here, the kitchen and den—which can be turned into a guest room or servant's quarters—can be easily accessed.

Even the hallway is decked with a majestic artwork, again, in gold. The spare bedroom is decked in light blue to make your guests cool and comfortable. Silver accessories are generously laid out to make them feel at home.

The spacious master's bedroom features purple, yellow and gold pillows for a luxurious feel. Meanwhile, your queen will surely take time to prepare for gala affairs over at her personal desk, which features brass accessories. A few steps away to the balcony, you can both view the stretch of your private domain: the entire Manhattan Garden City.

This private realm stretches over a large five hectares within the Araneta Center, the country's first lifestyle and leisure destination. A 729-meter garden walkway not only connects you to your neighbors in the other towers, but also hosts top amenities. You can sharpen your strokes at the lap pool, take a 30-minute jog at the winding paths, or simply read a book at the garden's benches.

THE LIVING area of the 2-bedroom Manhattan Garden City unit basks in contemporary European elegance.



LIVE like a royal couple at this 2-bedroom unit of Manhattan Garden City.

First transit-oriented dev't

As a king, you also need to be a master of your business or profession. As the first and only transit-oriented development that boasts of direct connection to both the LRT2 and MRT3 lines, you can easily reach your business appointments within minutes.

Making your business empire grow or your career take that next step will also be easy. You can always treat your business partners to much-awaited concerts, sports matches and events at the Araneta Coliseum and close deals within the Araneta Center's top restaurants.

The regal lifestyle, however, doesn't come with a steep price tag. It is yours to keep, for only P37,692 a month through Homelite, the revolutionary home loan from leading developer Megaworld Corp. and Security Bank.

Kings and queens take decisive action when it matters most, so do take some time off your busy schedule to visit the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall. But better do it soon, as units are going fast. Or call 810-3333 or e-mail inquire@themanhattangardencity.com for a viewing appointment.

Moldex introduces Alegria @ Dos Rios

WELCOME TO A WHOLE NEW PERSPECTIVE TO URBAN LIVING!!" This was the invitation offered by Joselito "Joey" Gutierrez, executive vice president and head of the Moldex Realty Marketing Inc. at the the recent launch of Alegria @ Dos Rios, a joint-venture project of Moldex Realty Inc. and South Ampton Realty Inc.

By this greeting, he was referring to a masterplanned development that will transform the Canlubang area into a commercial, residential and business district.

Leading the launch of Alegria @ Dos Rios were executives of the Moldex Group of Companies and South Ampton Realty Inc. represented by lawyer Jose Enrique Yulo.

Spanish/tropical-inspired

Alegria @ Dos Rios, a Spanish/tropical-inspired community within the industrial area of Canlubang, Laguna, is only a few minutes' drive from the Silangan exit of the South Luzon Expressway and only 300 meters away from the proposed Canlubang-Sta. Rosa Road (rotonda).

In keeping with its theme, Alegria @ Dos Rios was transformed into an al fresco café complete with palm trees, lamps and garden benches during the project launch. Like a Spanish courtyard, a fountain welcomed guests into the activity area. Pocket gardens accentuated the gently rolling terrain which leads to a view of Tagaytay.

Walkable community

Alegria @ Dos Rios offers a townscape that will encourage neighborhood interaction via a "walkable community" just like "the good old days."

Guests enjoyed the short program which featured several Spanish dances by the Julie Borromeo Performing Arts while a guitar and violin duet of the Soulful Mood played classical and contemporary music all throughout the day. Also in keeping with the theme, the excellent cuisine featured Spanish favorites like callos and paella.

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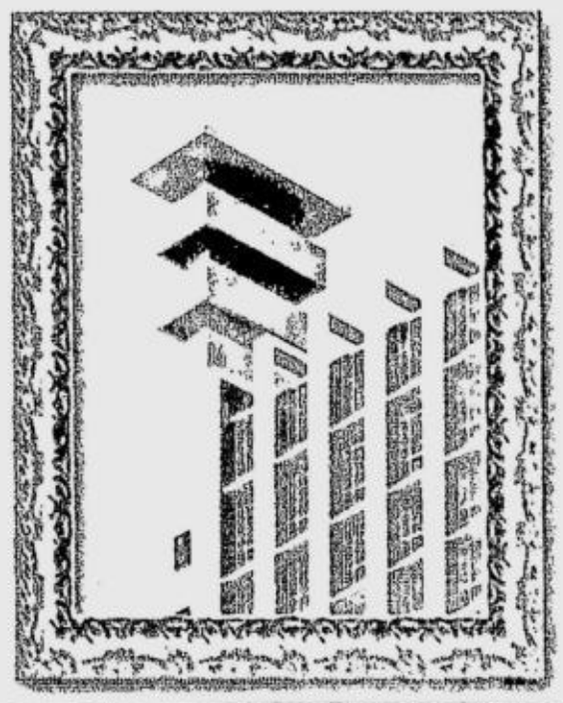

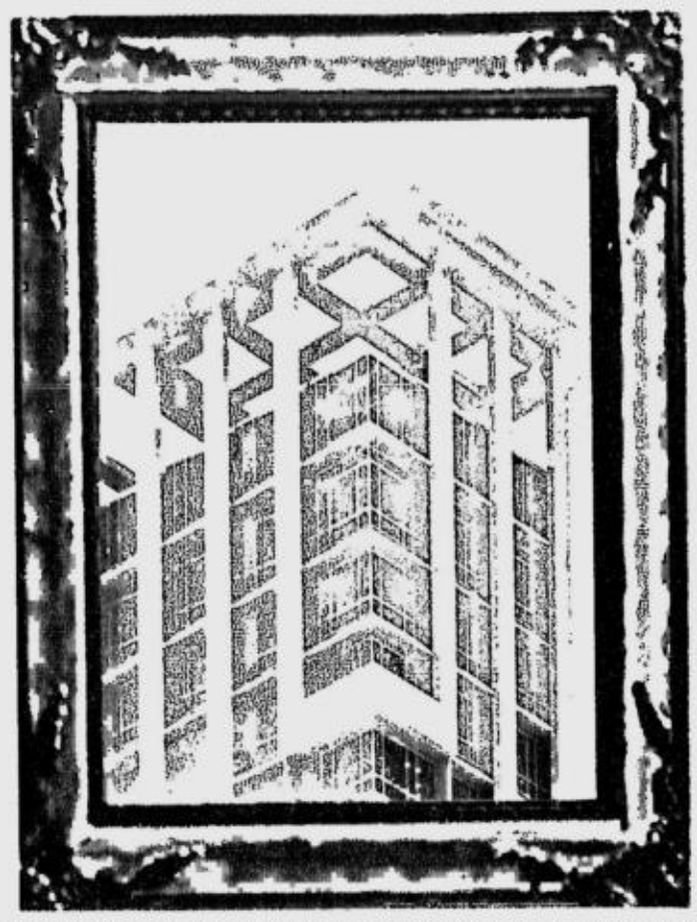

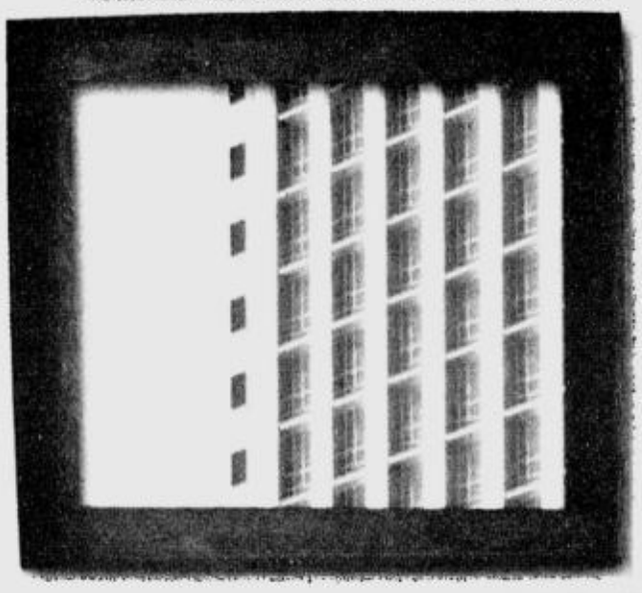

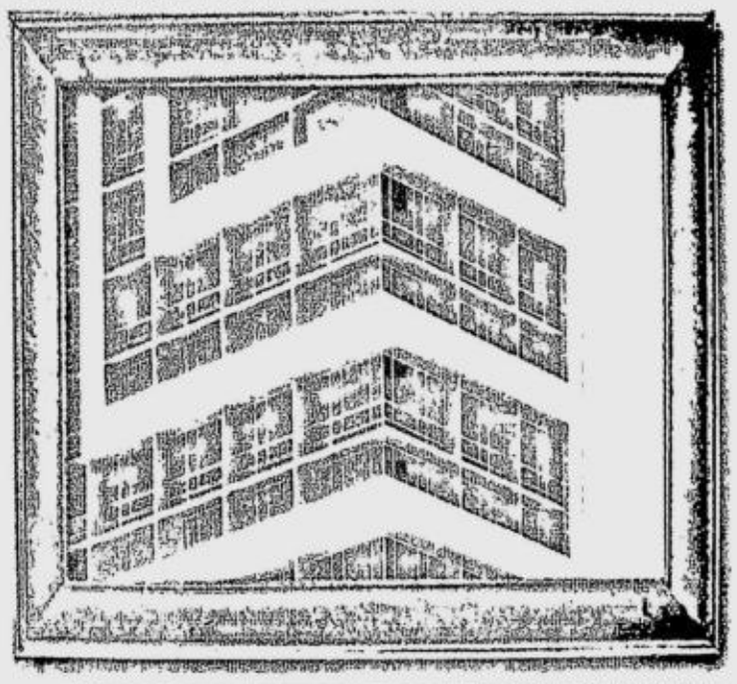

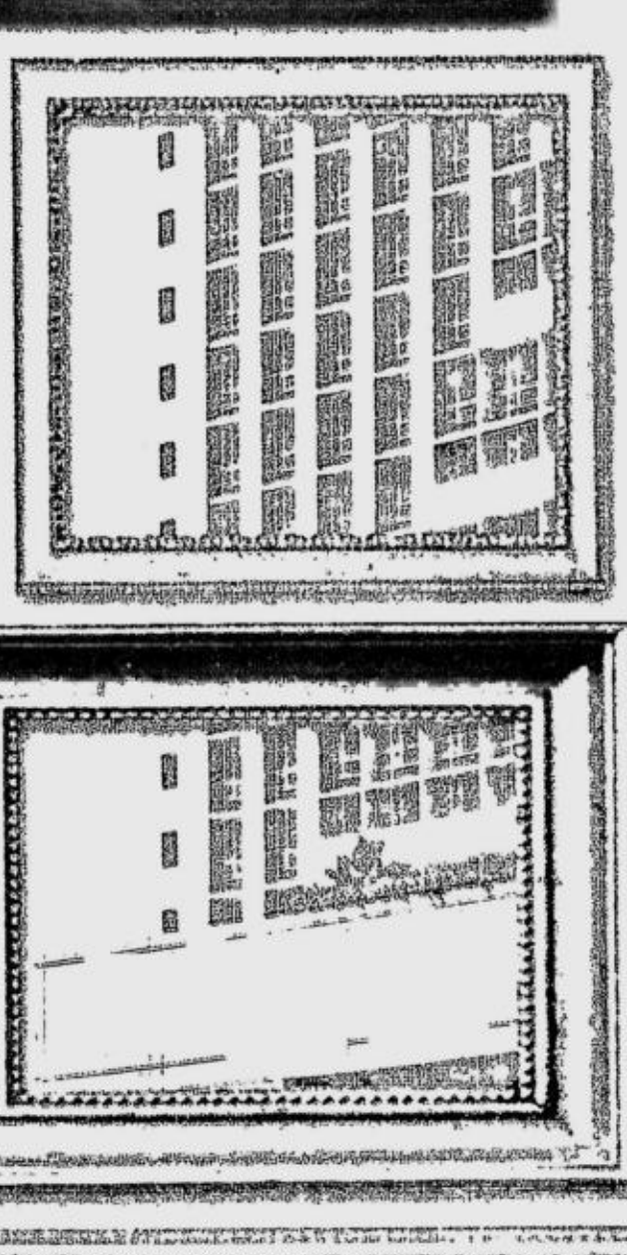

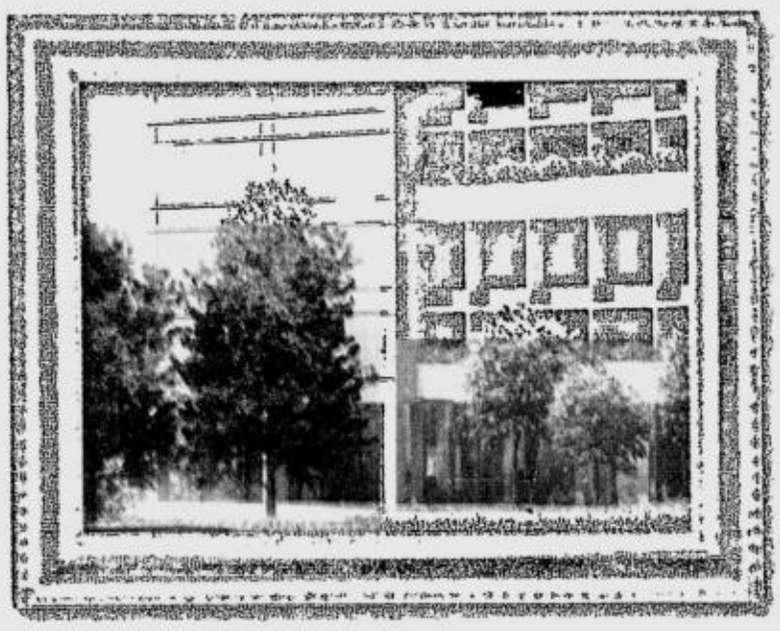

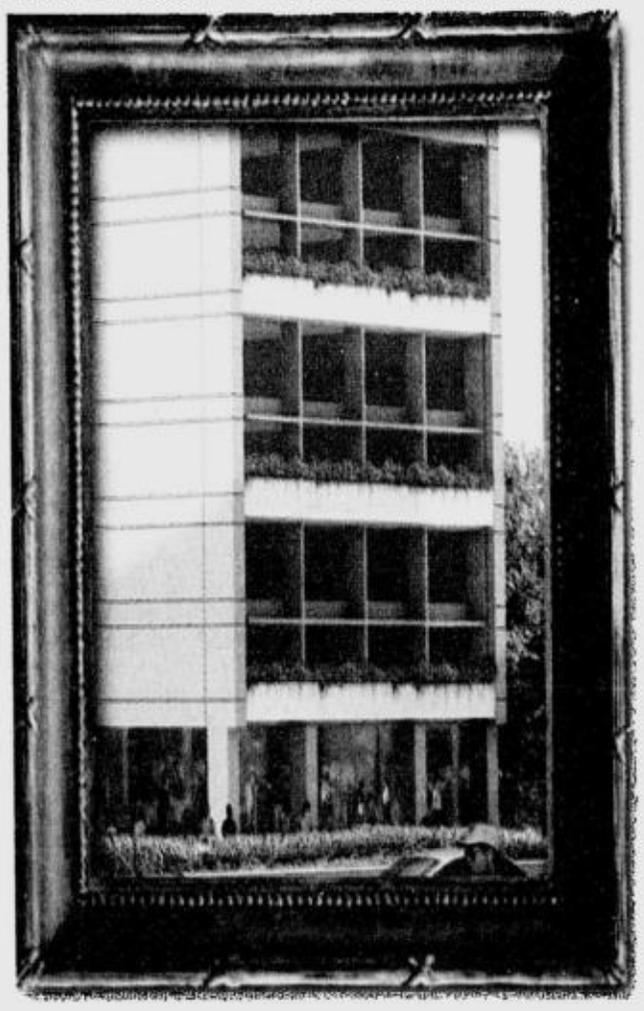

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Super!Countdown

32 days till

Super!

Indie High

Photography: CHARLES LU
Concept and digital enhancement by: PEPE DIOKNO
Sittings editor: DAVID MILAN
Cover stars: INDIE FILMMAKERS COOPERATIVE

The new Indies
The film movement of the moment page C2

Are you ready to go to Space Ibiza? page D3

Halle Berry wears Pinoy pride page D
Celestina at the People's Choice Awards

Ode to Joel Tantoco page C3

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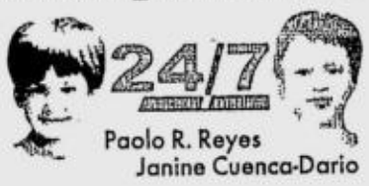
Indochine Introspective



OPENING TONIGHT IS "Indochine Introspective," a fine art photography exhibit by Sofia Gomez Genato. The 29-year-old photographer shares her haunting journey through China, Cambodia, and Vietnam (her home for the past three years) through a one-woman benefit show for Pondo ng Pinoy, a nonprofit organization centered on education and livelihood projects. The exhibit runs until Jan. 27 at OWG (One Workshop Gallery), La Fuerza Plaza II, Pasong Tamo Ext. cor. Sabio St., Makati. Call 810-5094.

Peter Pan @ Spiral

Every weekend until Feb. 4, the "Peter Pan" cast flies to Spiral (Sofitel Philippine Plaza, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay, phone: 551-5555 loc. 1086) for Saturday and Sunday brunch, where sweet treats such as Captain Hook's Rich Black Forest Cake and Tinkerbelle's Raspberry Fairy Mousse Cake await. Aside from offering a 15% discount for "Peter Pan" ticket holders, diners may also have their photos taken with the cast members.

Other Super! 24/7 events:

Jan. 13, Saturday

Sound, Chillitees, Sitti, and Sandwich at Saguijo; DJs Paolo Maralit & Cao Ocampo at Jill's; Indio I at 70s Bistro; Lounge-O-Rama w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Luscious w/ DJ Kevin Ruiz at Mezze; House Nation at Capone's; Rouge: Lounge in Color at M Café ; Sexy Saturdays at Absinth; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Bacardi Bling at Vida Malate; Salsa Night at Ricco Renzo; DJ Bam at Government; DJ Scratchmark at Prince of Jaipur; DJs Jenna & Matet at Prince of Jaipur (Mall of Asia)

Jan. 14, Sunday

Peter Pan at CCP Main Theater; Indochine Introspective: Photographs by Sofia "Ia" Genato at OneWorldGallery; Torero: Arturo Luz exhibit at UP Vargas Museum; Jazz Sunday Brunch w/ Vince Lahorra at M Café; Champagne Buffet Lunch at Paseo Uno

Jan. 15, Monday

Up Dharma Down & Paramita at Conspiracy; 6Cyclemind & Callalily at 70s Bistro; Hunan Food Festival at Tin Hau, Mandarin Oriental; Happy Mondays hosted by Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Chemical Underground w/ Kishore at Absinth

Jan. 16, Tuesday

Brigada, Sound, Yerbaguena, and Tropikasya at Saguijo; Cocojam at Conspiracy; Sparkle w/ DJs Erwin Edralin & Patch at Absinth; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Piano Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites

Jan. 17, Wednesday

Nyko Maca & Drip at Saguijo; Lush: Smooth Rn'B at Fiamma; Sugarfree at 70s Bistro; Look Models Night at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Skyy High at Vida Malate; Mishmash w/ DJ Brando Umali & Red-I at Absinth; Hustle & Flow Night at Temple; Wine Buffet at Mezze; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati; Hiphop Night w/ DJ Kimozave at Prince of Jaipur; DJ Bobby Nolasco at Prince of Jaipur (Mall of Asia); DJ Brit at Government; Noel Cabangon at Conspiracy

Jan. 18, Thursday

Orange & Lemons at Conspiracy; Sound & Saxoforo at Saguijo; Saturnine: Wawi Navarroza exhibit at Silverlens Gallery; Brownman Revival at 70s Bistro; DJ Boyet Almazan at Fiamma; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; Jazz Sessions w/ Jana del Prado & Empathy at M Café; Worldwide Thursdays w/ Soundsgood at Nuvo; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Open Mic Night at Azzurro Linden Suites; Thirsty Thirst-days at Bed

Jan. 19, Friday

Space Ibiza: World Tour 2007 feat. DJ Sin Plomo at World Trade Center; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; House Sessions at Fiamma; Kiss My-HOUSE w/ DJ Elian at M Café; Sunshine w/ DJ Mon Maramba at Absinth; Soul Food w/ DJ Roam at Fig & Olive; Flammable Fridays w/ DJ Mau Torres at Mezze; Release w/ DJ Owens Sun at Embassy Club; Soul Shine w/ DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive w/ DJs Darrel & McDash at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJs Scratchmark & Jenna at Prince of Jaipur; Joey Ayala at Conspiracy

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 GIGS through your mobile phone and send to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events @mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com.

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FROM LEFT: Monster Jimenez and Dennis Marasigan are orgasmic, relieving themselves, while Emman de la Cruz looks at absolutely nothing. Cris Pablo tries to swallow a rock in hopes of becoming Zsa Zsa Zaturnnah. Paolo Villaluna wants death by clapper, behind him, Ellen Ongkengko and Marge Templo make street art. Jim Libiran shoots blanks, while his Chits Jimenez hails the wall.

Is indie our messiah?

Super! writer and filmmaker Pepe Diokno explains the buzz around independent film, and why the buzz is all wrong.

By Pepe Diokno

THERE IS ONE MAIN REASON, I THINK, THAT art has always been the most effective tool for the advancement of civilization. Art is a Trojan horse—it brings to people the things they should be talking about, in the manner that they want it talked about.

Take the first half of that line, "It brings to people the things they should be talking about," and you have news. Take the second half, " ... the manner that they want it talked about," and you have the MMFF. (Read: commercial crap.) News has never really sprung audiences into action. Commercial fluff does the negative, and reinforces the degraded utopia we have as our status quo. It's always been a novel, a picture, an essay, a book, a film that has gotten people to stand up and, in the words of Britney Spears, "dooo something."

Now, revolutions and advancements in civilizations don't happen everyday. (Like, Apple has one convention a year, and certain presidents only manage to get caught red-handed, like twice or thrice a year.) During the time between revolutions, audiences are perfectly happy sitting on their asses, eating everything that's put in front of them—be it Kim and Gerald's new show to, *um*, "I am Sorry." And that brings us to the second, more important use of revolutions: to get people to stand up, so they can get blood back in their asses and get rid of the tingly feeling in their feet.

More "developed" civilizations naturally advance more than us in the third world, and that's because the Trojan horses of revolution reach these audiences more. In the first world, people have money to buy books—here, we go to Fully Booked just to be able to say we're going to Fully Booked. People in the first world have the extra money to go out of their way and go to art galleries and museums—here, our most popular art is MMDA art. So it's sad, but in the Philippines, because so little money trickles down to our masses, and because of a lack of government support for the arts, the only media that has managed to stay inside our audience's walled cities are mainstream free TV, and to a decreasing degree, mainstream film.

The Gap(s)

Makers of local mainstream TV and cinema have been more than happy to feed audiences a good dosage of "what they want." And they've been doing only that since after martial law, when they lost their sense of "what audiences need to know." They have—stupidly—let audiences just sit there. They have—stupidly—kept bombarding audiences with the same fare they've produced since the late 80's. They have—stupidly—done all that, while disregarding their audiences' need to stand up and get blood back in their asses.

However, one by one, the asses of Philippine audience members have been getting dead numb. These people—with dead numb asses—have been looking for alternatives. Filipinos have been looking for Trojan horses to get inside them. (And no, I did not just write the last four paragraphs to build up to the double meaning in that last line.) Audiences are standing up in search of something that will fill the gaps their current feeders leave.

The commercialization of media is something that happens worldwide, and when that happens media tends to put more weight on fluff and fanfare—losing touch with the real world audiences live in. Now, in the Philippines, if we had a more responsible, forward-thinking, and competent local media, the gap would be just that: relevance. The gap would just be "the things people should be talking about." So in most societies, including ours, the revolution would probably consist of realist works about war or poverty or something. Or, "The Daily Show with John Stewart."

But here are gaps in quality, accessibility, control, and even ethics. And because of this, more and more local audiences aren't just looking for alternatives—they're looking for saviors.

Indie ___, Superstar!

So there's a whole generation of middle class individuals who put film and TV at the center of their lives, and are looking for salvation. They've turned the rise of independent artistry into a revolt against the tyranny of, say, Mother Lily. These people have romanticized it, saying indie is being pure, chaste, and everything that is beautiful in the world. People have turned indie into the "next big things," the "future," the utopia we all deserve.

Indie filmmakers, however, are going, "Who me?"

Putting the future of the film industry on the shoulders of independent filmmakers is "a misguided expectation," says writer-director (and I am Super! awardee) Emman de la Cruz. The problems of the film industry, he says, can only be solved through the cooperation of everyone in it—whether they make films independently or under studios.

Emman brings up a question, though: What is "indie"—is it a totally different camp from mainstream cinema? Is this based on an aesthetic or ideology? Are indies a magical cult of revolutionaries? Are indies even real people?

Well, the truth is, "indie" and "mainstream" only refer to ways filmmakers make their films.

But that's hard for this saviorless generation to swallow. Because of the ugly way politicians and film industry bigwigs have run the business, people have turned to indies for everything mainstream is not. Indie has become the term for what is anti-status quo, and a representation of this current generation's rebellion. But that's exactly what some indie filmmakers don't want. Generations peak and wane and bring with them the symbols they wore to represent them. But independent artists aren't just flavors of the month—they've come, and they're eyeing permanent resident status.

"So, if independent filmmakers aren't our saviors, if they aren't the 'next big thing,' than what are they?" our label-hungry society asks. Well, they're filmmakers. They're people who make films and want to show 'em.

The Indie Coop

But if we strip "indie" of the pomp and romanticism around it, we're left with a pretty sad picture: that of a little filmmaker who's broke, having finished his film, and has no place to show his finished work. He, in all likelihood, will not make his money back. He's probably looking at another three years until his next film. Until then, it's work at the call center. He could be the next Cannes winner, though. He could actually be the guy who makes the one good "Mano Po" film. But the millions of people who don't get to see his work won't get to know that.

That's a very real picture, and that's part of the reason not many films are being made. Super! has always talked about how much talent there is in our country—and yeah, there is no lack of filmmakers. It's the lack of outlets that is killing our talent.

To remedy this, independent filmmakers have come together—not just to collaborate or discuss film aesthetics—but for business. Enter the Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative. "Filmmakers need to be able to sustain themselves by doing their profession," Emman de la Cruz says. He is the chair of the Cooperative's Board of Directors.

"The IFC brings together independent filmmakers in an organization that makes it all possible: exhibition and promotion of movies. The IFC provides film services such as production, distribution, exhibition, promotion and marketing. It extends savings and credit facilities to its members for the production of independent films. It also procures film-related goods and services (at discounted rates) for the use of its members," the group says.

Why does this sound different? Because for once, artists are breaking the myths around them and facing the reality of their situation. This, more than anything, is what's going to keep them alive.

Conclusion

So while audiences are looking for a Jesus in independents, the only way independents are going to survive (and benefit the world) is if they break the Jesus mold, and refuse all the fluff they're being adorned with. Independent artists are not our saviors—they're filmmakers. And it's funny, but it's those, and not a new savior, that is going to save the film industry.

Super! readers, salvation doesn't come from a messiah figure. It comes from within you. It's time to stop looking to others for a utopia, it's time to strip things of ideal concepts and ego. It's time to stop putting things on pedestals. It's time to start facing reality, and doing. That's where the better change comes, the kind of change that won't just leave along with our generation.

WHERE'S THE ACTION? Indie Filmmakers walk on the red carpet of realism.

What is Indie?

Is it an object? Does it blend?

Super! went out and asked members of the Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative for their input. This *is* one step short of putting an indie filmmaker in a blender, so sorry.

Independent is a many splendored thing. —**Paolo Villaluna**

Independent simply means b el ng free—i.e. free from conventions and constraints. The farther you are from the center of mainstream, the more free you become.—**Doy Del Mundo**

You follow your vision as a director blissfully and all actors and crew are enjoying the unexplainable experience of making films. —**Rica Arevalo**

Being independent means not having to live up to anybody's expectations. —Chits Jimenez

Being independent is not just relying on one's own energy, but challenging falseness, mediocrity. —**Raya Martin**

The term has evolved. Today there are no absolutely independent movies because the original lines have been blurred. But the ideals are the same—movies with unbridled vision, at any time testing the limits of convention. —**Vives Anunciacion**

True independence lies in nowhere else but the spirit, and while the term becomes more popular, there are fewer and fewer filmmakers in the country that possess this.—**Alexis Tioseco**

Independent? Think MMFF then Ctrl+Z —**John Torres**

The independent spirit refers to the ideal that the filmmaker experiences creative or artistic freedom—freedom from the often overbearing concerns of parties whose interest in filmmaking are solely profit-oriented. The ideal is that the vision of the filmmaker for his/her work takes precedence.—**Margie Templo**

Independent is what we become when we grow up—as a persons and filmmakers. We grow up, hopefully without sacrificing our passion, identity, roots, history, and vision. —**Emman de la Cruz**

Independent is being able to do what you want on your own terms. —**Dennis Marasigan**

Indie means never having to say you're sorry. —**Monster Jimenez**

See a movie. An indie movie.

indieSINE is the first commercial theater in the country dedicated to Super independent films. Come and be Super! next week, as the theater is cristened with a whole wave of independently produced Filipino films.

The theater, which is run by the Independent Filmmakers' Coop, is home to a film fest called "Bagong Agos," which runs from Jan. 16 to 24. The festival opens on the 16th at 9 p.m. with "Huling Balyan sa Buhi" by Sherad Anthony Sanchez, and closes on the 24th at 9 p.m., with "Imahenasyon," an effort by various directors. (Below is the schedule of the festival.)

indieSINE is located at Robinson's Galleria in Ortigas.

Jan. 17: Size does not matter
11a.m.: New shorts 1. 1:30p.m.: "Perfumed Nightmare" by Kidlat Tahimik. 4p.m.: The shorts of Rox Lee, Nick de Ocampo, and Raymond Red. 6:30 p.m.: "Bayaning Third World" by Mike de Leon. 9p.m.: "Babae sa Breakwater" by Mario Ojara.

Jan. 18:
11a.m.: New shorts 2. 1:30 p.m.: "Roomboy" by Aloy Adlawan. 4p.m.: "Sarong Banggi" by Emman de la Cruz. 6:30 p.m.: "Mga Pusang gala" by Ellen Ongkengko Marfil. 9p.m.: "Rotonda" by Ron Bryant.

Jan. 19:
11a.m.: New shorts 3. 1:30 p.m.: "Donsol" by Adolf Alix. 4p.m.: "Sa North Diversion Road" by Dennis Marasigan. 6:30p.m.: "Ilusyon" by Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos. 9p.m.: "Kamiling Love Story" by Erwin Romulo.

Jan. 20: Pink Saturday
11a.m.: "Masahista" by Billante Mendoza. 1:30 p.m.: "Ang Pagdadaga ni Maximo Oliveros" by Aurelius Solito. 4p.m.: "Compound" by Wil Fredo. 6:30 p.m.: "Rme and Juliet" by Connie Makatungo. 9p.m.: "Metlogs" by Cris Pablo.

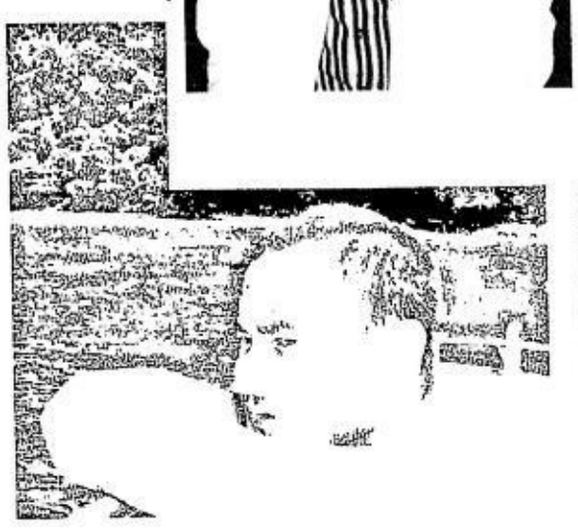
Jan. 21: Crime does not pay
11a.m.: "Isnats" by Mike Danalan. 1:30 p.m.: "Cavite" by Ian Gamazon and Dominque Gonzales. 4p.m.: "Sa Aking Pagkagising Mula sa Kamulatan" by Ato Bautista. 6:30 p.m.: "Big Time" by Mario Cornejo and Monster Jimenez. 9p.m.: "Kubrador" by Jeffrey Jeturian.

Jan. 22: Blood is thicker than water
11a.m.: "Pepot Artista" by Doy Del Mundo. 1:30 p.m.: "Ang Daan Patungong Kalimugtong" by Mes de Guzman. 4p.m.: "In da Red Corner" by Dado Lumibao. 6:30 p.m.: "Riles" by Ditsy Carolino. 9p.m.: "Manro" by Dante Mendoza.

Jan. 23: Rated X for Experimental
11a.m.: "Heremias" by Lav Diaz. 9p.m.: The shorts of Khavn de la Cruz.

Jan. 24: Rated X for Experimental
11a.m.: "Rigodon" by Sari Lluch Dalena and Kieth Sikat. 1:30 p.m.: "Cut" by Jon Red. 4p.m.: "Indio Nacional" by Raya Martin. 6:30 p.m.: "Todo Todo Terros" by Jon Torres. 9p.m.: Closing film, "Imahenasyon"

The titles and schedule above are subject to change.



Goodbye, JT

By David Nugent

WHAT A WAY TO start 2007.

Joel Tantoco—"JT" or "the General"—an extraordinarily beloved son, brother, cousin and uncle to his family, and adored friend by so many, passed out of our world and into God's in the wee hours of Monday morning.

His passing is a loss that, for those who were lucky enough to have had a connection with him in this life, is hard to bear. For a few years, Joel was one of those constants—no matter what went on in our own day-to-day lives, there was a place in this world where the sun shone brightly, the house music soothed and waves rolled gently onto a beach where a deeply tanned, smiling Joel was King of the Day.

Joel was so many things to so many people and perhaps because each of us had our own uniquely personal experiences with him, that to cherish his memory is so facile, and to accept his death, so hard.

I met Joel maybe 6 or 7 years ago in one of those smoky moments in a Makati bar. Other than the chance nightclub run-in, I don't think I got to know him well enough until a couple years later when he moved into my condo building, and took an apartment across the hall from me.

I think we found solace in each other then because the circumstances and choices we'd made up to that point in our lives had so many commonalities.

We'd sit in my flat, eating homemade pizza or roast chicken and we'd ruminate on our respective lots in life. Joel hinted at family dysfunctionality, and I shared my own family's wacked story with him.

Maybe we bonded so well then because we saw the same glimpses of a disjointed childhood spread across continents and cultures. Late at night we'd find each other and sit on my balcony, cigarettes in hand, seeking a respite from relationships and a refuge from the toil of the daily grind.

Joel loved fashion—the look and the cut and the feel of well-made clothing—and he knew the history of the great brands that he'd been exposed to since his childhood. Being a Tantoco, it seemed to me, was for him more about enhancing and enlarging that great legacy that he'd inherited from his grandmother and grandfather, and which was being stewarded by his father and family. Donnie was his idol.

Eventually, Joel moved out of the apartment across the hall, into a house he shared with his sister Kat, and over the next couple years I began to see him less and less. I'd run into him, myself on the periphery of the nocturnal party crowd, and of which Joel was usually in the epicenter. Good nights, good music, good times were as much a part his ability to create ties with others, and were far more than just an excuse to be licentious or irresponsible.

Though, to be honest, he could be irresponsible at times, just like all of us. It was part of his irrepressible charm. "It's just JT," a close friend would say with a wink and a smile and you couldn't help but never feel anything but tenderness towards him. Joel chose his friends well and he could sense whatever experience they were having.

Time and time again I recall Joel—himself dealing with his own dreams and demons—taking the time out to listen, to laugh, to try and make whatever pain you had at that moment disappear. His innate ability to give empathy right when you needed it was never demanded in return.

My very last memory of Joel was sitting on the terrace of a Boracay hotel, sunglasses on and sharing a joke, last Monday. We talked for maybe half an hour, not long really. He had clearly left one phase of this life and was determined to be happier in another. His search for peace and contentment in recent months had brought him back home, and I remember him looking me in the eye, explaining that while there had been some speedbumps along the way, his life's trajectory now looked positive, open and hopeful.

I don't think it would have ever occurred to me to think that the home he'd return to only one week later would be a far more ethereal and peaceful place than his home on earth.

James Dean once said that one should dream as if one would live forever, and live as if you'd die today. In my dreams Joel will forever be on that Boracay beach, white sands blazing, the heat creating droplets of perspiration on his perpetually tanned skin. In my dreams he is at peace and surrounded by everyone who has loved and shared a moment of his life. In my dreams the music never ends and the smiles go on and on. In my dreams Joel lives forever.

Bye for now JT. See you again one day.

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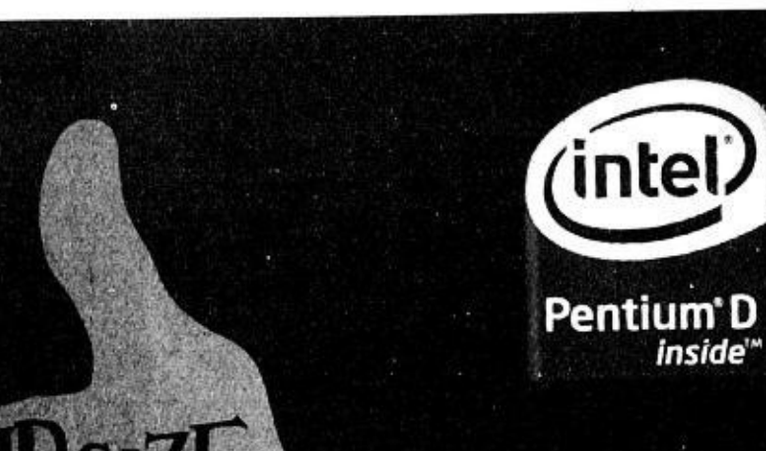

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Goodbye, JT

By David Nugent

WHAT A WAY TO start 2007.

Joel Tantoco—"JT" or "the General"—an extraordinarily beloved son, brother, cousin and uncle to his family, and adored friend by so many, passed out of our world and into God's in the wee hours of Monday morning.

His passing is a loss that, for those who were lucky enough to have had a connection with him in this life, is hard to bear. For a few years, Joel was one of those constants—no matter what went on in our own day-to-day lives, there was a place in this world where the sun shone brightly, the house music soothed and waves rolled gently onto a beach where a deeply tanned, smiling Joel was King of the Day.

Joel was so many things to so many people and perhaps because each of us had our own uniquely personal experiences with him, that to cherish his memory is so facile, and to accept his death, so hard.

I met Joel maybe 6 or 7 years ago in one of those smoky moments in a Makati bar. Other than the chance nightclub run-in, I don't think I got to know him well enough until a couple years later when he moved into my condo building, and took an apartment across the hall from me.

I think we found solace in each other then because the circumstances and choices we'd made up to that point in our lives had so many commonalities.

We'd sit in my flat, eating homemade pizza or roast chicken and we'd ruminate on our respective lots in life. Joel hinted at family dysfunctionality, and I shared my own family's wacked story with him.

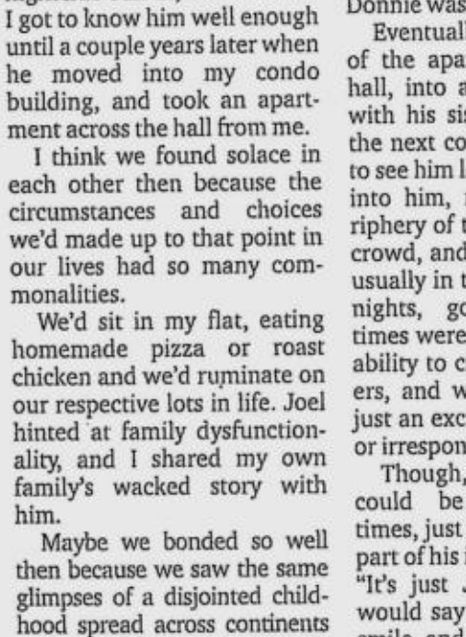
Maybe we bonded so well then because we saw the same glimpses of a disjointed childhood spread across continents and cultures. Late at night we'd find each other and sit on my balcony, cigarettes in hand, seeking a respite from relationships and a refuge from the toil of the daily grind.

Joel loved fashion—the look and the cut and the feel of well-made clothing—and he knew the history of the great brands that he'd been exposed to since his childhood. Being a Tantoco, it seemed to me, was for him more about enhancing and enlarging that great legacy that he'd inherited from his grandmother and grandfather, and which was being stewarded by his father and family. Donnie was his idol.

Eventually, Joel moved out of the apartment across the hall, into a house he shared with his sister Kat, and over the next couple years I began to see him less and less. I'd run into him, myself on the periphery of the nocturnal party crowd, and of which Joel was usually in the epicenter. Good nights, good music, good times were as much a part his ability to create ties with others, and were far more than just an excuse to be licentious or irresponsible.

Though, to be honest, he could be irresponsible at times, just like all of us. It was part of his irrepressible charm. "It's just JT," a close friend would say with a wink and a smile and you couldn't help but never feel anything but tenderness towards him. Joel chose his friends well and he could sense whatever experience they were having.

Time and time again I recall Joel—himself dealing with his own dreams and demons—taking the time out to listen, to laugh, to try and make whatever pain you had at that moment disappear. His innate ability to give empathy right when you needed it was never demanded in return.

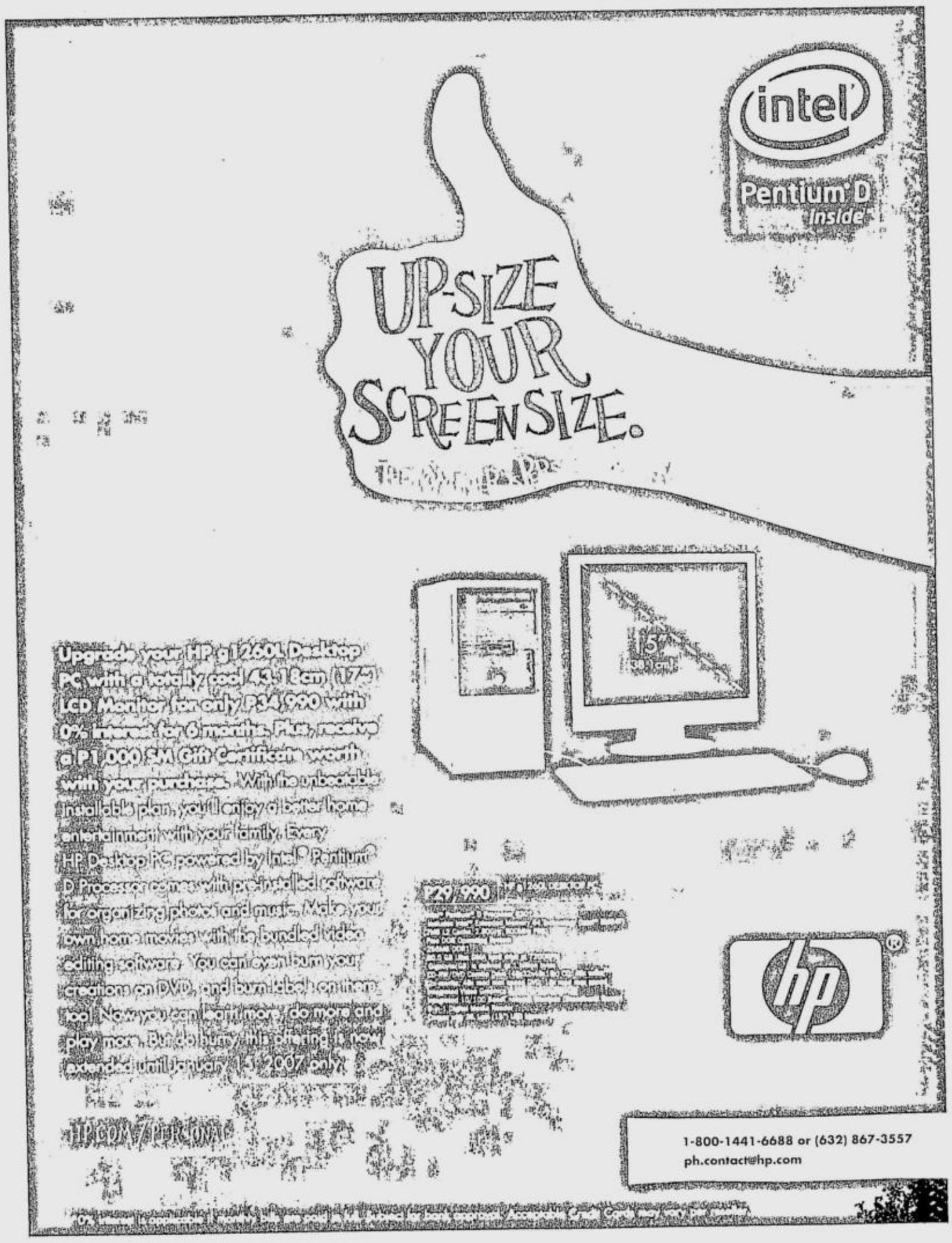


My very last memory of Joel was sitting on the terrace of a Boracay hotel, sunglasses on and sharing a joke, last Monday. We talked for maybe half an hour, not long really. He had clearly left one phase of this life and was determined to be happier in another. His search for peace and contentment in recent months had brought him back home, and I remember him looking me in the eye, explaining that while there had been some speed-bumps along the way, his life's trajectory now looked positive, open and hopeful.

I don't think it would have ever occurred to me to think that the home he'd return to only one week later would be a far more ethereal and peaceful place than his home on earth.

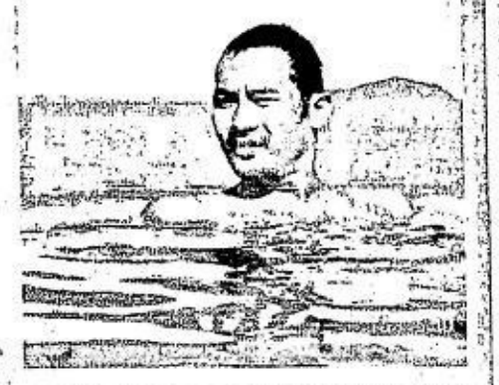
James Dean once said that one should dream as if one would live forever, and live as if you'd die today. In my dreams Joel will forever be on that Boracay beach, white sands blazing, the heat creating droplets of perspiration on his perpetually tanned skin. In my dreams he is at peace and surrounded by everyone who has loved and shared a moment of his life. In my dreams the music never ends and the smiles go on and on. In my dreams Joel lives forever.

Bye for now JT. See you again one day.



Joe-el! Joe-el! (It's Jhowl)

Joel Tantoco is one of the most well-loved personalities in the scene. Now that he has moved on to his mission in heaven, let us wish him well. Don't forget Joel and how much he loved—that's how he wants us to remember him



THE SONG THAT'S PLAYING IN MY mind is Michael Jackson's "Gone Too Soon." Sometimes, life brings us to different crossroads with bittersweet lessons. Just like this past week, when the recent deaths of well-loved party scenesters EJ Litton and Joel Tantoco came as a shock to many. Ironically, as of press time, I am in Las Vegas, a place where Joel and I bonded. It was in this city where I bumped into Joel in a fashion conference, along with his sister Kat.

For once in my life, I am at a loss for words. When Tina Tinio sent me a text message informing me of Joel's death, I was speechless. I immediately phoned Celine Lopez, who at that time was in California—she couldn't talk.

Joel is one of the most selfless people I have ever met. One of the most loved in the scene, he was a "teddy bear"—someone you'd like to take care of. As fragile and vulnerable as he was, he was also a person of strength and character. From our moments working together in Rustan's to our unforgettable party bonding time at Rena (our "private" club with DJ David Jacob at the helm)—these were not wasted moments of intoxication. These were genuine moments of friendship, of family time set amidst a backdrop of fun.

I was told that the night before he went to his "other life," Joel had a moment with Donnie and Crickette Tantoco. He said he wanted to start life anew. Well, God really loves Joel and granted his wish.

Joel has always loved sunning and is known for his flawlessly tanned complexion. Now that he is in heaven, he can get all the sun he wants.

We mourn over Joel's passing because we feel we haven't spent enough time with him. But I realize that I have spent enough time with him—and the indulgent character Joel is, I'm sure he's enjoying his time up there. God is the DJ and Joel is his ledge dancer.

Right now I am having my private conversation with Joel and far away from Joel in spirit—we'll always have that bond between us.

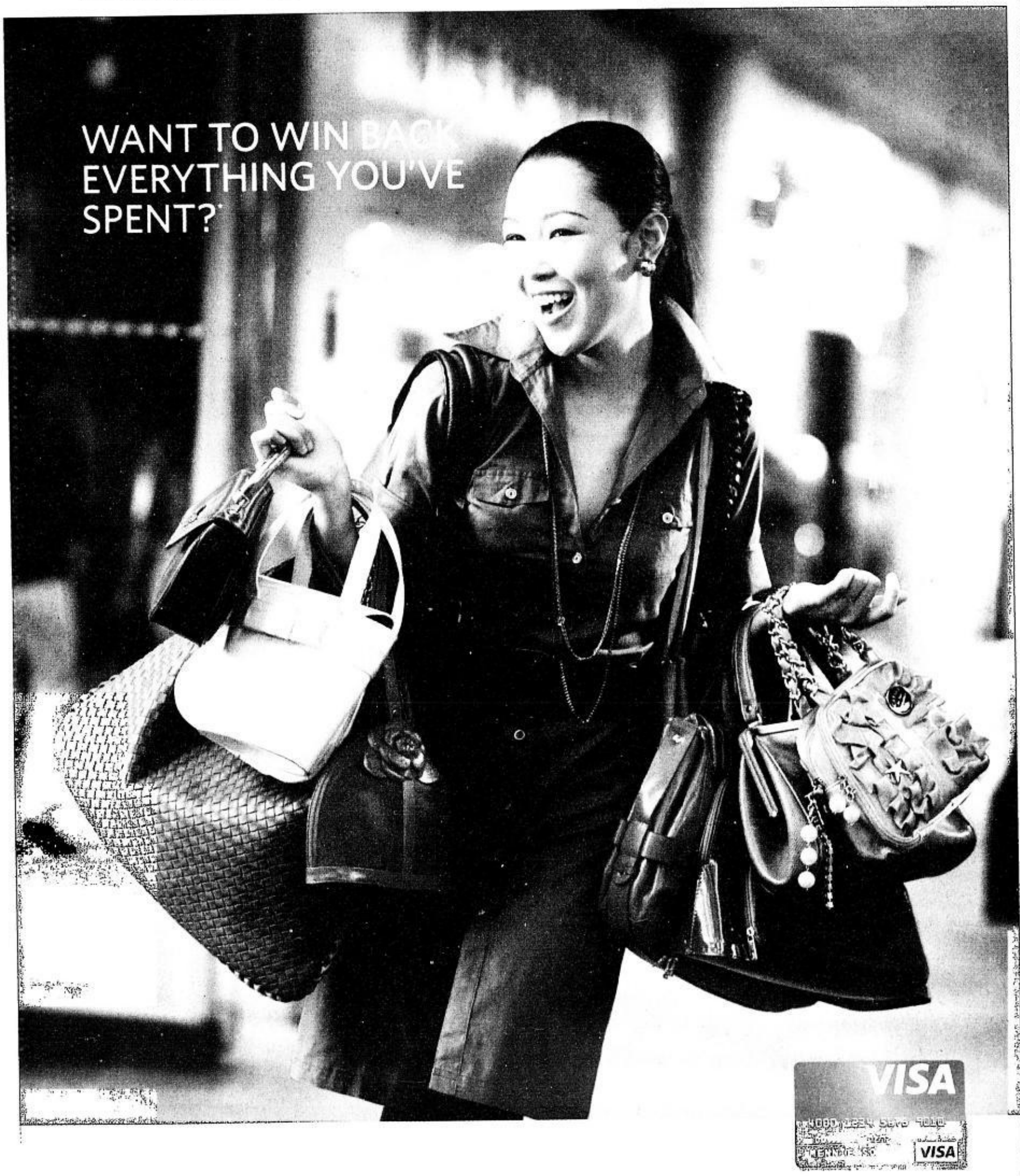
He's telling me now to tell his family and friends that he loves them so much and that he knows how much everybody loves him as well. He is telling me now that we need not feel any guilt, because when he was alive, we showered him with enough love—enough for him to feel fulfilled with his mission on earth. He needs to move on now and he just wants us to remember how much he loved us. That love from Joel, we should never forget.

"Life is short so let's live it" has always been Joel's mantra. So let's live it the way Joel lived it. We're alive for this reason. And if it takes Joel to teach us that, then I'm sure he's happy to impart that lesson to us. Joel, we'll miss you. ***Tim Yap***

Gone Too Soon

By Michael Jackson

Like A Comet
Blazing 'Cross The Evening Sky
Gone Too Soon
Like A Rainbow
Fading In The Twinkling Of An Eye
Gone Too Soon
Shiny And Sparkly
And Splendidly Bright
Here One Day
Gone One Night
Like The Loss Of Sunlight
On A Cloudy Afternoon
Gone Too Soon
Like A Castle
Built Upon A Sandy Beach
Gone Too Soon
Like A Perfect Flower
That Is Just Beyond Your Reach
Gone Too Soon
Born To Amuse, To Inspire, To Delight
Here One Day
Gone One Night
Like A Sunset
Dying With The Rising Of The Moon
Gone Too Soon



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b. First 6 digits of the account number
c. Last 4 digits of the account number
d. Amount of transaction
e. Date of transaction
f. Time of transaction (24-hour format)

Ex. VISA Mennie So, 400000, 1234, 1000.25 ,111206, 1808

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Catwoman loves Celestina

By Tim Yap

AWARD-WINNING HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS Halle Berry was pregnant, but her best accesory for the People's Choice Awards was this Celestina Moonlight loop-woven copper serpentine bracket bag by Tina Maristela-Ocampo. The bag retails for $600 and the actress purchased it in Barneys in Beverly Hills. Celestina is Tina Maristela-Ocampo's line of specially handcrafted and Philippine-made bags. "I was pleasantly surprised and flattered to find that she's a fan of Filipino crafts," bemused Tina, who was recently featured in Vogue Magazine for her latest venture as bag designer.

Halle Berry carries a 'Proud to be Pinoy' bag by Celestina for the last People's Choice Awards

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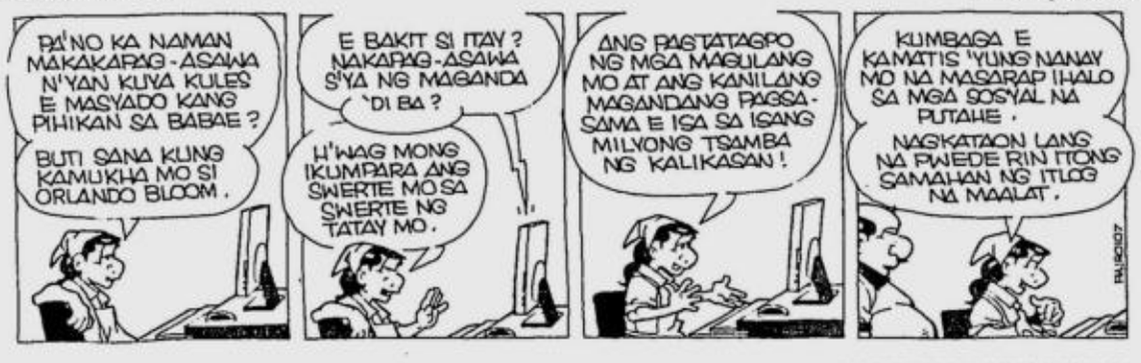

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LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

AT MINSAN NA NAMANG NAPATUNAYAN ANG GALING NI HESUS SA MGA HIMALA NANG GINAWA NYANG GINGERBREAD MAN ANG BATONG ESTATWA NI DAVID

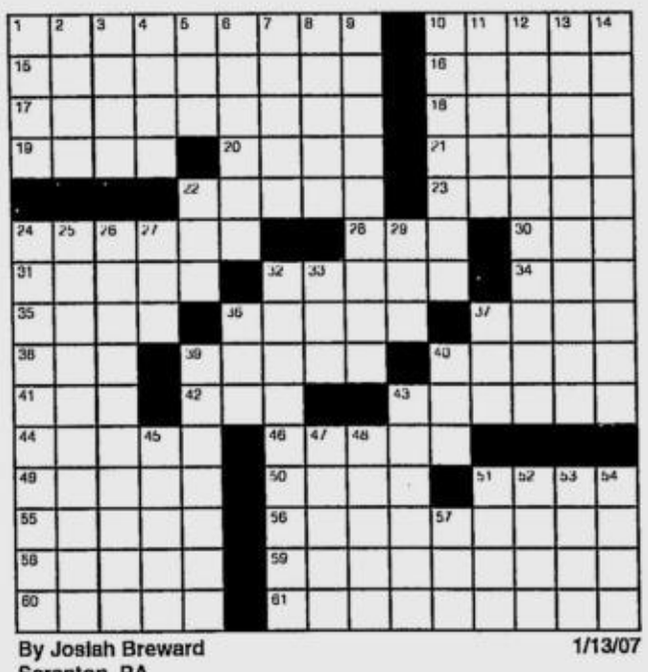
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA

1/13/07

ACROSS
1 Employee crime
10 Scraping tools
15 Big cheese
16 Soviet collective
17 Pain medication
18 Close shave
19 Togo's capital
20 Boulder
21 Swing a thurible
22 "__ of God"
23 Make sense
24 Cinematic wolf man
28 Building wing
30 New World monkey
31 Brogan binders
32 Little nails
34 Mil. branch
35 Author of "The Nazarene"
36 Abstains from eating
37 Mayberry boy
38 Seashell seller of rhyme
39 Fender flaws
40 Cars
41 Remote ctrl. button
42 Order form abbr.
43 Negatively charged atoms
44 Val d'__, France
46 Solidarity
49 Apple discards
50 River of NYC
51 Ballplayer Moises
55 Pavlov and Lendl
56 Lionel products
58 Stiff bristles
59 Oolong shipping containers
60 Current vogue
61 Moving stairway

DOWN
1 Romance lang.
2 Kiddy taboo
3 Junk e-mail
4 Adjective-forming suffix
5 Hammarskjold of the U.N.
6 Vigor
7 __ and the Argonauts
8 In reserve
9 Passenger places
10 Scamps
11 Bowshaped
12 Doesn't back down from
13 School of thought
14 Tired state
22 DDE's rival
24 Alexander Pope, e.g.
25 Has an open discussion about
26 Step up the pace
27 Bk. after Ezra
29 Mormon abbr.
32 Bench built into a wall
33 Queue after Q
36 Fixed charge
37 Assent, in Aix
39 Decked out
40 Even one
43 New York prison
45 French historian
47 Nostrils
48 Author Asimov
51 Under sail
52 "__ we forget..."
53 Italian eight
54 Cold War foe
57 Org. of Flyers and Jets

Friday's Puzzle Solved

R	O	Y	A	L	■	L	A	I	D	■	A	P	E	S
E	N	O	L	A	■	A	L	L	A	■	S	E	E	P
B	O	U	L	D	E	R	D	A	M	■	E	B	R	O
■	■	■	S	I	E	V	E	■	A	R	A	B	I	C
A	P	R	■	N	E	A	R	E	S	T	■	L	E	K
G	E	O	R	G	E	■	■	S	C	E	N	E	■	■
L	A	C	E	S	■	S	I	T	U	■	I	B	I	S
E	L	K	E	■	S	H	O	E	S	■	N	E	S	T
T	E	A	S	■	M	A	N	E	■	C	E	A	S	E
■	■	N	E	P	A	L	■	■	M	I	S	C	U	E
S	T	D	■	P	R	E	S	T	O	N	■	H	E	R
P	U	R	E	S	T	■	T	O	R	C	H	■	■	■
A	T	O	P	■	S	T	O	N	E	H	E	N	G	E
C	O	L	E	■	E	R	A	T	■	E	M	A	I	L
E	R	L	E	■	T	I	T	O	■	S	I	G	N	S

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1/13/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You value your security and your reputation in society, and you will work very hard to achieve and protect it. You constantly try to improve and better yourself. Despite your personal ambitions, socially you are lively and entertaining. Others are often amazed by you. The year ahead will embrace change, perhaps something as significant as around 1998.
Birthdate of: Orlando Bloom, actor; Patrick Dempsey, actor; Julia Louis-Dreyfus, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Avoid religious and political arguments today. It's all too easy to get your belly in a rash about something. People easily take sides today and feel heated about issues.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel unusually passionate about practically everything today. This could promote steamy romance, or it could make people jealous and territorial about what they own. (Yikes.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Legal conflicts with partners and friends are likely today. The problem is that you want to have your own way, and you're not prepared to compromise. How sensible is this? (Not very.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day for doing any kind of heavy work. Make improvements, introduce reforms. You'll get great satisfaction out of whatever you accomplish today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Parents must be patient with children today. Avoid outbursts of temper. Just accept your obligations and responsibilities. Do the best you can, and remember to smile and talk gently.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Work hard to make improvements and changes at home today. However, avoid conflicts and arguments with family members. Be gentle and understanding, because people are easily upset today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Walk away from arguments today. People are not ready to compromise. Quite the opposite—someone might be looking for a fight.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might feel obsessed about buying something today. Take a deep breath and give matters a sober second thought. You'll be glad you did.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're tempted to take over and run things today. Your ambition is out of hand! My advice is: Cool your jets. Be reasonable.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Avoid dangerous neighborhoods today. This is the kind of day where violent crime can flare up. Don't take any chances. Forewarned is forearmed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Power struggles with friends or members of groups are likely today. You want to persuade others to agree with you and vice versa. Lighten up! (You don't have to agree with others or make them agree with you.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your ambition is so strong today that it's almost out of hand. Be careful of being ruthless in going after what you want. Easy does it. Instead, apply this energy to doing some good, hard work.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			9	5		3		
	5						8	
9				2				
				6				7
3		4				5		2
1				3				
				9				6
	6						2	
		3		7	1			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

1/13

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	4	1	5	8	9	6	2	3
6	3	8	7	1	2	4	5	9
2	5	9	3	6	4	7	8	1
9	2	6	1	7	3	5	4	8
5	7	3	4	9	8	2	1	6
1	8	4	2	5	6	9	3	7
3	6	7	8	4	5	1	9	2
4	9	2	6	3	1	8	7	5
8	1	5	9	2	7	3	6	4

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1-12

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Start the year with a big bang and experience a new level of clubbing. From the producers of the highly successful Tiesto In Search of Sunrise Tour in 2006 comes Space Ibiza ... Up up and away!

DJ SIN Plomo

Get lost! in Space

THIS Friday, get into your rockets and head to the World Trade Center!

By Paolo R. Reyes

SUMMER IN THE BALEARIC ISland of Ibiza has become synonymous with Space, an unassuming nightclub in Playa d'en Bossa that bears witness to a yearly pilgrimage of partygoers all *locos por la música* (crazy about the music).

In 2005 and 2006, Space was named "Best Global Club" during the International Dance Music Awards in Miami, defeating fellow nominees Ministry of Sound, Amnesia, and Pacha. Since it opened for business in 1991, it has become a Mecca for all-day dance parties featuring the likes of Carl Cox, Sasha and John Digweed, Steve Lawler, and Erick Morillo.

On Friday, Jan. 19, the award-winning party venue packs its bags and leaves the sun-drenched shores of Spain to make its way to Manila for the Space Ibiza: World Tour 2007. The World Trade Center gates open at 10 p.m., with Space resident DJ Sin Plomo at the helm. Pre-sellling tickets are priced at P600, and are available at selected Folded & Hung, Odyssey, and O Music outlets. Call 897-2472.

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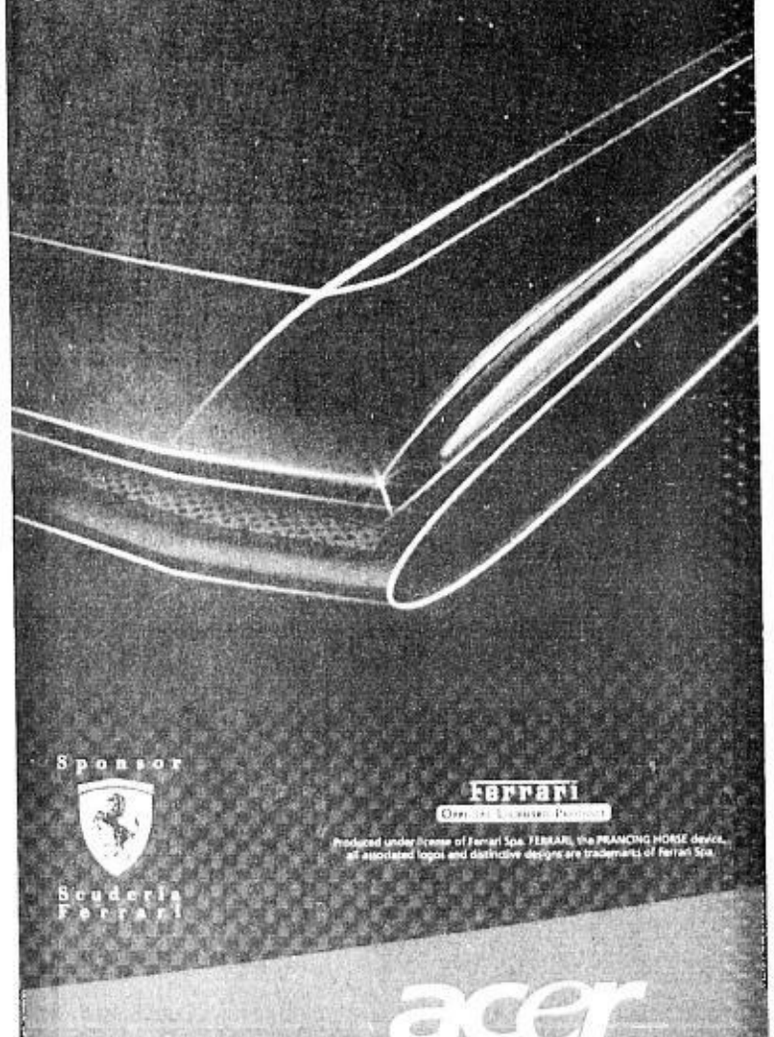
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For registration and other seminar schedules and details, call 02-8935964 SMS 0917-5380797 or 0917-6082276.

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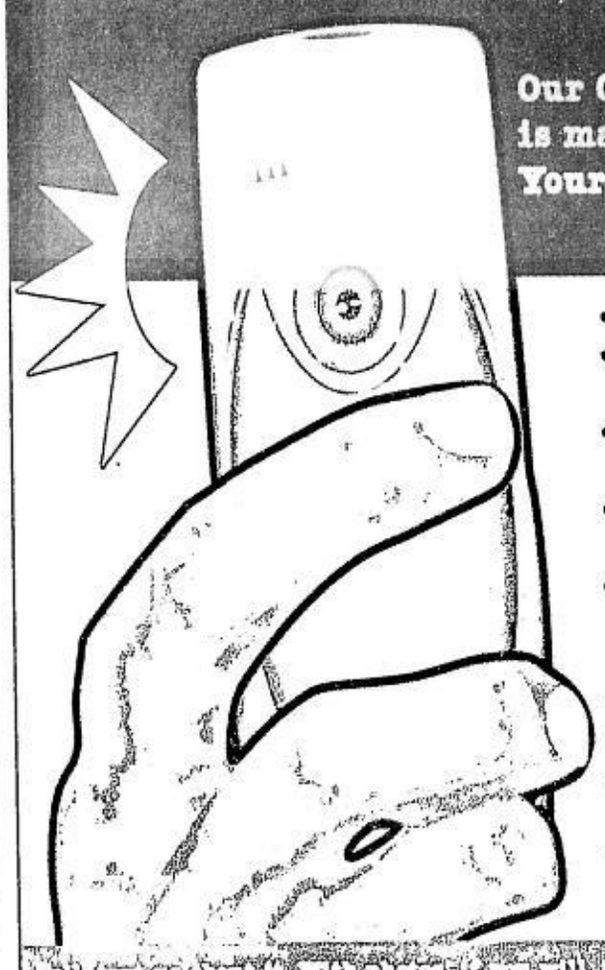
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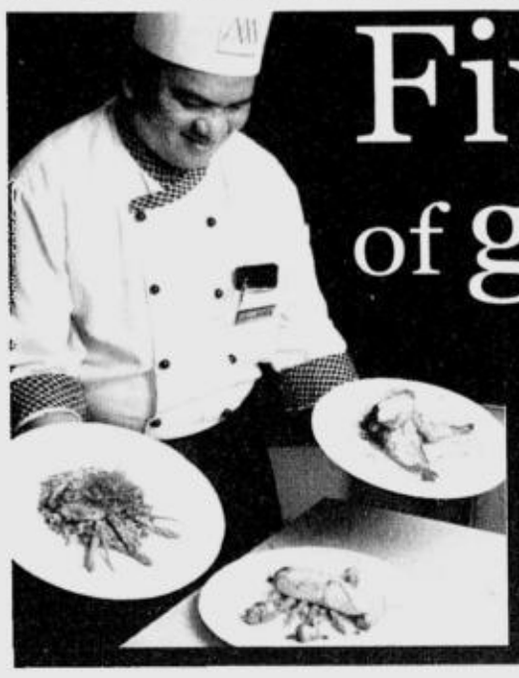

Five dishes of great seafoods

ROTISSERIE TURNS TO A SEAFOOD CONnoisseur's paradise this January. Overwhelm your senses with Manila Pavilion Hotel's year-opener. Presenting, Five Dishes of Great Seafoods.

Five recipes that bring out the best in this glorious harvest of the deep: Poached Salmon with parsley marble potatoes and asparagus with caviar hollandaise sauce, Grilled Seabass on top of creamy garlic, smoked bacon and lentils de puy, Fish and Seafood Bouillabaisse, Escabeche of Sardines and Seabass and King Prawns on Spanish and mushroom ragout served with garlic butter sauce.

This delectable seafood fare is available for the whole month of January. Rotisserie is open for lunch from Mondays to Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. while dinner is served every Mondays to Saturdays from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

For inquiries and reservations, please call Manila Pavilion Hotel at (02) 526-1212 extension 2505.

The Tivoli's gourmet cooking classes

MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MANILA'S MONTHLY gourmet cooking classes conducted by The Tivoli chef Stefan Trepp make its second season run at the hotel's signature fine-dining restaurant The Tivoli beginning Jan. 20, following the success of the creative culinary classes held last year. This series of cooking classes on the fine art of culinary creation is designed for gourmands, food lovers, and culinary enthusiasts, that would also impart to participants gourmet cooking recipes and techniques to enhance their skills and appreciation of the creative culinary art.

Creative gourmet cooking classes that are held once every month on a Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., feature a three-course menu of classic to avant garde and fusion dishes that enrollees will also dine on at lunch, at P1,700+++. The Jan. 20 culinary class presents the many sumptuous ways of preparing oysters: Marinated oysters - pickled, jellied, or poached style; Steamed paupilettes of dorade mussels and oyster ragout with white wine cream sauce; and, Raspberry mascarpone tiramisu. Held in cooperation with ABS CBN Publishing's Food magazine, enrollees also get a chance to win complimentary subscriptions to the award-winning culinary publication.

Succeeding classes on Feb. 17 and March 17, feature the creative ways of presenting cheese and lobster dishes respectively; while classes on April 20, May 18, and June 22, highlight pasta creations, chocolate, and asparagus dishes respectively. To add to the exquisite gastronomic experience, The Tivoli's monthly cooking classes also present wine and beverage pairings to enjoy with each course. A 10 percent discount is offered to Food Magazine subscribers and those enrolling for minimum of three classes.

Swiss chef Stefan Trepp comes to The Tivoli from The Westin Mission Hills Resort and Spa in Rancho Mirage, California where he was sous chef. Prior to that, he worked with the world-acclaimed Burj al Arab from 2002 to 2005 where he rose to the position of junior sous chef; at the Grand Hotel Quellenhof Resort and Spa in Bad Ragaz, Switzerland as demi chef de partie, and with the Grand Hotel Kulm in Arosa, Switzerland as commis de cuisine, after attending the apprenticeship programme at the Hotel Fravi in Andeer, Switzerland.

The Tivoli is now accepting enrollees for its gourmet cooking classes. For details, call The Tivoli at 750-8888 extension 2431 / 2432.

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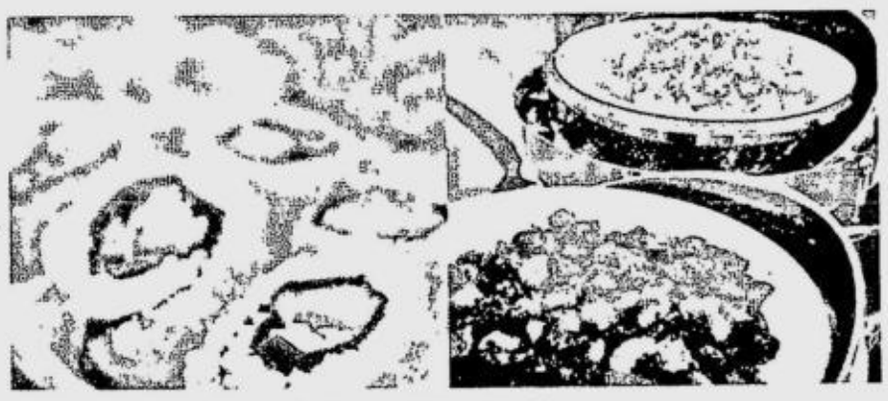
Astoria Plaza offers guest a well-deserved escape from the urban hustle right at the heart of the city. Check-in at Astoria Plaza's hip and spacious 1-bedroom suite for only P3,450++ and 2-bedroom suite for only P5,450++. Accommodation include a complimentary breakfast, use of hotel amenities and free shuttle service within the Ortigas area. Astoria Plaza is located at #15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries and reservations, please call 687-1111 or visit www.astoriaplaza.com. Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.



The world in a plate at The Bellevue

TRAVEL THROUGH THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD, CROSS CONTINENT after continent and journey to mystical lands of rare herbs and mouthwatering spices with The Bellevue Hotel's Tastes of The World Buffet until Jan. 20. Cuisines from Italy, Japan, Spain, Chinatown, Filipino and seafood favourites tickle the palates for a generous and hearty meal. Available for lunch and dinner at the Bellevue's Café d' Asie Restaurant. Also sample the fusion of zesty fruit and creamy chocolate this January with The Bellevue Hotel's Drink of the Month. Orange Choco Freeze, a special concoction of orange and mantecado ice cream combines tang and tastiness in a drink that is sure to refresh. Comes with a super huggable Pugsley stuffed toy. Plus, The Bellevue Hotel, gathers crowds of party-goers every Wednesday for the Spirit of '67's weekly gig. The hotel's 20/20 Entertainment Bar becomes a music and dance arena as the country's favorite live act performs tunes from the 60's to the present. Experience memorable nights of musical bliss for only P500 nett, consumable for food and beverage. Show starts at 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

People, Events & Products

Double fruity delight from Gardenia

Tired of the usual peach and mango offerings? Then Gardenia's Peach Mango Fun Bun will surely get you all excited. A deliciously soft, great tasting bun snack with luscious peach-mango filling, Gardenia Peach Mango Fun Bun surely adds zest to your eating experience. Whether it's for your kids baon or your own snack, Gardenia Peach Mango Fun Bun will definitely satisfy. It's so yummy that it will make kids want more. Moms will be thrilled to know that Gardenia Peach Mango Fun Bun is made only of the freshest ingredients. From the choice of mangoes and peaches, to the eggs, flour, milk and sugar, Gardenia makes sure that each ingredient is only of the highest quality. So for a delicious snack, enjoy bite after bite of Gardenia Peach Mango Fun Bun.

PRESIDENT GMA VISITS SHARP BOOTH

Photo shows President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo attending the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) Electronics Business Opportunities Exhibition and Conference. She stopped for more than five minutes inside Sharp Philippines Corp's (SPC) booth, the only display booth she went into after the ceremonial opening of the exhibit. The exhibition and conference was organized as part of the 12th Asean Summit held recently and spearheaded by the Asean Electronics Forum together with the local government agencies on trade and investment and the electronics industry association. As a leading and appliance manufacturer and exporter, SPC is an active mover in the industry and serves as a perfect example of successful business operations among member-nations companies.

TELETECH SPENDS CHRISTMAS WITH KIDS

TeleTech employees give of their time, talent, and resources to be with less privileged kids last Christmas. TeleTech is the fastest growing BPO company in the country and it currently supports 10,000 employees in eight call centers all over the Philippines. TeleTech's headquarters are in Denver, Colorado but its global network extends across 80 customer management centers in North America, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and Latin America.

AU(JASHS) '69 5th Annual Reunion

THE ARELLANO UNIVERSITY (JOSE ABAD SANTOS HIGH SCHOOL) Class of 1969 is inviting all AU(JASHS) graduates of 1969 to attend the AU(JASHS) '69 5th Annual Reunion to be held at the Arellano University school campus on Jan. 14 (Sunday) at 11 a.m. Attire is semi-formal, and if possible, bring along your old 1969 high school photos (if they are still available). For more details, contact the school's Registrar's Office at 831-8077 and look for Mrs. Deorita Ramos Palma, or call the following contact persons: Celia Pedro Tom - (0906)308-0349, 831-4855; Vic Ventura (0919)740-8094, 776-2557; and Butch Pena (0918)202-7855, 241-6551.

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

Text us your feedback: inquirer sat name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Celebrity moppets captivate viewers

By Nestor U. Torre

EACH ENTERTAINMENT season, scores of new talents make their bid for viewers' favor, but only a few manage to attain stardom. This year, one of the most promising young bets is Bindi Irwin, the peppy daughter of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin, who died while shooting a TV special about dangerous sea creatures last year.

Bindi is only eight years old, but she's already set to star in her very own TV show, "Bindi, the Jungle Girl," which will soon debut on the Discovery Kids Channel.

Endangered species

In the 26-part series, Bindi will continue with her father's mission—to educate the viewing public about the animal world, and the need to protect and conserve endangered species. Unlike her dad, however, Bindi won't be laying her life on the line just to keep viewers interested!

Locally, Bindi's promotional counterpart is none other than Sharon Cuneta and Sen. Kiko Pangilinan's little daughter, Frankie, who's coming on really strong in her mom's new commercial for McDonald's.

In fact, Frankie shares the spot in a big way with Sharon, because she sings its jingle—and very well, too. What do you know? We have a new child star-in-the-making on view, and she's as pert and talented as can be.

Will Frankie go on to cutting an album and acting on TV and in the movies? Producers would certainly hope so, but she could also go the way her *ate*, KC Concepcion, chose—namely, to stay out of mainstream show biz and its many negative elements, and just make her career and fortune in theater and as a product endorser. It's worked in KC's case, and could do the trick for Frankie, too.

On the *other* hand, Sharon and Kiko could think of ways to protect their young daughter while allowing her to have a show-biz career, as well.

For starters, maybe she could work only during the summer months and on long holiday breaks? She can cut an album and tape a guest stint on TV without having to play the off-putting show biz game.

Sheltered existence

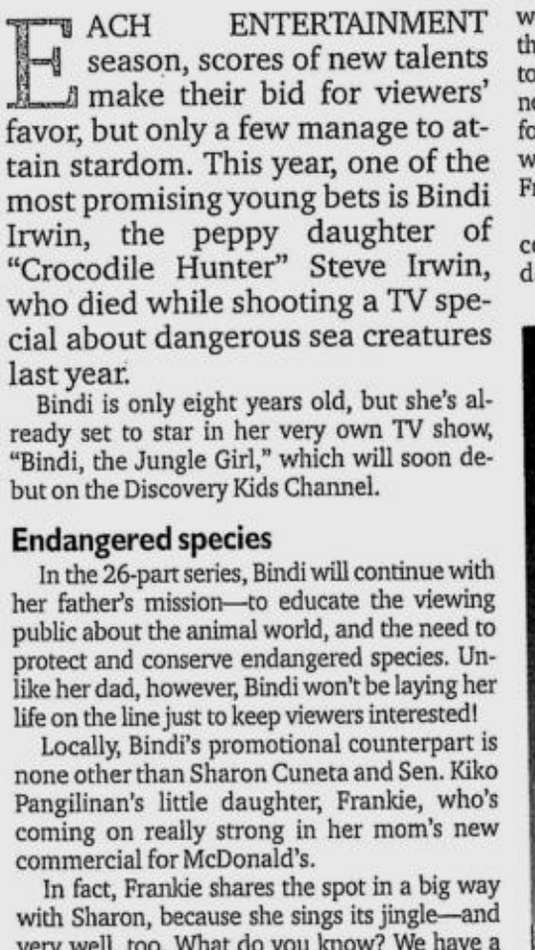
That way, she can share her obvious talent with the entertainment audience without compromising her safe and sheltered existence.

CELEBRITY/ E2

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

FRANKIE is her Megastar-mommy's daughter, indeed.

BINDI continues with her father's mission.



BARRINO AND HICKS. Break new ground.

'AI' champs aim to please

By Rito P. Asilo

AS FANTASIA BARRINO, RUBEN STUDDARD and Taylor Hicks will attest, winning the top plum on "American Idol" could give a gifted singer's career the necessary push in the right direction—but it doesn't guarantee success or sustainability in the recording profession.

Taylor Hicks learned this the hard way when his self-titled, post-"Idol" album, which debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 chart two weeks ago, slipped to No. 15 last week. (Curiously, Chris Daughtry's first recording, "Daughtry"—released three weeks earlier—clung on to the No. 8 spot after it landed at No. 2. Also performing exceedingly well on the pop charts is "Some Hearts," the debut collection of Season Four's big winner, Carrie Underwood, who remains at No. 4 58 weeks after her CD peaked at No. 2!)

Soulful bent

But, the 30-year-old, husky-voiced Idol's thematically scant but groove-heavy album, **"Taylor Hicks,"** should develop legs with its infectious, pop-flavored arrangements, deliciously soulful bent, and the performer's vocal brio.

With his blue-eyed-soul sound, the singer and his songs evoke immediacy, sensitivity and warmth—qualities that make him accessible to the mostly pop-weaned, American Top 40 fans. The guy works hard to please—and derives great pleasure from doing it!

The fusion of genres in Taylor's music is most apparent in Rob Thomas' anthemic "Dream Yourself Awake," Hicks' self-penned "The Deal," Bryan Adams' gospel-inflected "The Right Place," the funky "Give Me

'AI'/ E2

FORUM

The MMFF best picture award: Quality or quantity?

"ENTENG KABISOTE." Does the box-office champ deserve the festival's coveted top plum?

By Noelani Torre

WHAT DO VIEWERS THINKS OF THE current MMFF controversy? Do they even *care*? Apparently, they do. Some reactions:

"*Kailan ba naging mabenta ang* art? *Ang unang dapat tanungin ay kung sino ang gumawa ng* criteria *nila. Sila ang walang alam. Kung pera lang ang habol nila, huwag nang mag*-festival."—***Rommel Camba, 31, musician***

"Best picture *is* best picture! It shouldn't be based on the number of people who watch it."—***Jan Alcanzo, 16, student***

"Whoever thought of the idea was not thinking straight. Why didn't they think of consulting people who knew better?"—***Trina Pascual, 21, teacher***

"Box-office earnings should be a different category and, if needed, could be given a separate citation."—***Debbie Tuazon, 45, call center agent***

"*Masyado nilang pinalalaki ang* issue. *Isa nga lang ang napanalunan ng* 'Enteng,' *kukunin pa nila? Maganda naman ang* special effects *ng* 'Enteng' *a.*"—***Julius Caesar Blanco, 16 student***

Sequels

"What else is new? *Sa* MMFF, *paulit-ulit lang ang mga pelikula. Sila-sila lang din lagi. Ang dami nang se*quels—parts 3, 5, *kahit 8!*

Ang mga tao, hindi nabigyan ng kalayaang pumili. Hindi dapat festival *ang tawag dyan kundi labanan ng mga sikat.*"—***Arwin Nava, 32, musician***

"*Narinig ko sa* news *na baka buwagin na ang* MMFF and I agree. *Ang* policies and procedures, *nila di na nagwo*-work. It needs new people."—***Yan-yan Camba, 28, supervisor***

"'Enteng Kabisote' doesn't deserve the award, because the criterion for judging is not appropriate."—***Ailene Sorcoso, 16, student***

"The best picture award should not be based on the millions a movie gets. *Madaming* films *na hindi naman maganda pero pumapatok sa takilya.*"—***Juliefra G. Rada, 62, pharmacist***

"It's an insult to people like me who have studied film appreciation, because we know what a good film is—and it's not in the number of tickets sold!"—***Ace Mella, call center agent, 21***

"I don't think 'Enteng Kabisote' deserves the MMFF best picture award. It didn't even win a single other award."—***KC Ledesma, 15, student***

"This is a good move on the part of the festival organizers. At the end of the day, the viewers' choice should be recognized—our moviegoers can decipher what's good and what's bad."—***Oscar Antonio L. Yalong, team leader, 28***

Overall impact

"The best picture award should be given to the film with the best overall impact, *excluding* the commercial value."—***Glen Dale Fantonalgo, 16, student***

"Filipinos should learn to make quality films. They should set higher standards for films that make it to the competition—doing so would benefit the viewers."—***Coco Crespo, HR specialist, 26***

"*Sawa na ako, lagi na lang may* controversy. *Minsan,* feeling *ko gumagawa na lang sila ng* issue *dahil kailangan nilang magpapansin.*" —***Bernadette Assam, 34, housewife***

Celebrity

From page E1

We understand why Sharon is so careful about allowing her daughters to "go show biz." After all, her own young life became terribly complicated by her fame as a young star, and by her precocious romance with and marriage to Gabby Concepcion.

Pitfalls

But, she's learned from that experience, and can thus help her daughters avoid many of the pitfalls that come with child or teen stardom. So, will Frankie be given her chance to shine—beyond product endorsements?

In any case, a few years from now, it should be the turn of Sharon and Kiko's third daughter, Miel, to strut *her* stuff!

More...

From page E5

find it interesting that the stations would assign news and related programs to professional-looking anchors or reporters, but assign entertainment-related segments to glamorous personalities clad in flashy, beaded dresses or trendy get-ups.

Better hours

I wish ABS-CBN would give Ricky Carandang better hours and a high-profile interview program. The guy obviously does his homework, asks intelligent questions, and conducts himself like a pro.

Finally, I wish television would take itself seriously. We viewers do, you know!

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3 BLOOD DIAMOND MTRCB R-13 12:30, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00
4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX MTRCB. PG-13 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
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ERAGON G 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:00,9:20	ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:35,3:05,5:35, 8:05,10:30	ERAGON G 1:00,3:20,5:40, 8:00,10:20

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	Feb 16 & 17, 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
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3 BLOOD DIAMOND 1:55, 5:05, 8:15, 11:10 R-13
4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13

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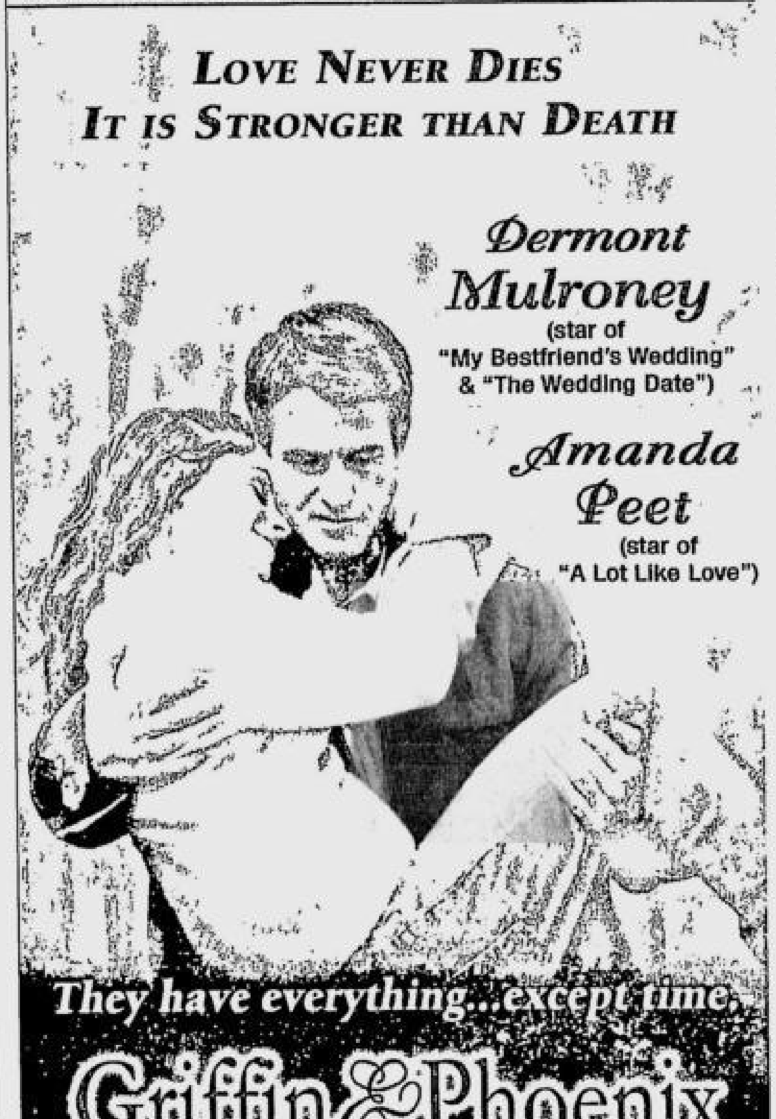
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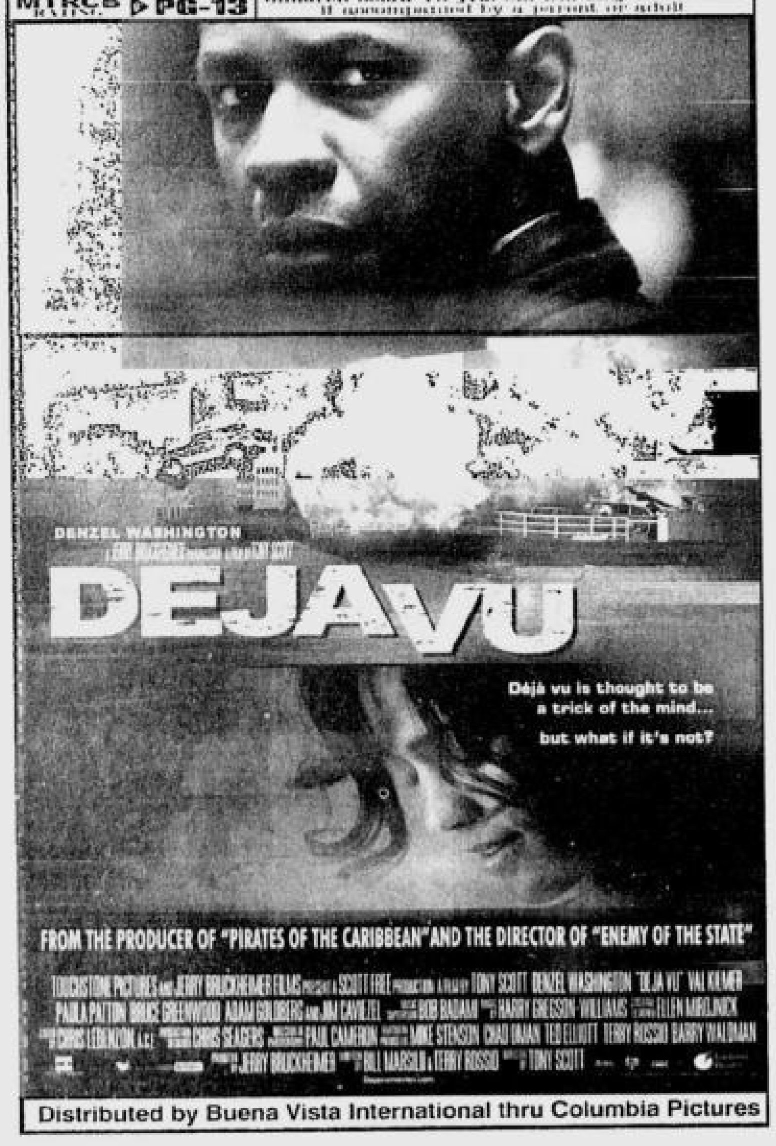


Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

NOW SHOWING

Another thespic punch from DiCaprio

By Rito P. Asilo

"Blood Diamond"
D: Edward Zwick
S: Leonardo DiCaprio, Djimon Hounsou, Jennifer Connelly

DICAPRIO AND HOUNSOU. Riveting performances.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO DELIVers another Oscar-worthy performance as Danny Archer, a self-serving South African diamond smuggler, who embarks on a perilous journey to the jungles of war-torn Sierra Leone to retrieve a rare pink diamond.

Joining him on this fateful, life-altering trip is idealistic journalist Maddie Bowen (Jennifer Connelly), who's out to expose the intricate web of big-time diamond smuggling (which, in the '90s, was said to have financed Sierra Leone's raging civil war), and fisherman Solomon Vandy (Djimon Hounsou), who found the contentious gem.

War, ambition, love and politics constitute the gist of Zwick's latest action-drama—a provocative message-movie that covers a lot of social and political issues, which are made more relevant and involving by DiCaprio and Hounsou's riveting performances.

In a rare moment of introspection, as scenes of violence, greed and murder start to penetrate his armor of cynicism and detachment, Danny is asked: "Will God ever forgive us for what we've done to each other?" He dismisses the question with a soul-stirring answer: "God left this place a long time ago." However, when he gets his chance to make a difference, he finally finds his conscience, welcomes his fate—and redeems his soul.

"Griffin & Phoenix"
D: Ed Stone
S: Dermot Mulroney, Amanda Peet

Ed Stone's well-meaning tear-jerker uses the classic boy-meets-girl scenario when Griffin (Dermot Mulroney) and Phoenix *aka* Sarah (Amanda Peet) meet and match. Soon after, however, conflict emerges when Griffin and Sarah's happily-ever-after fairy tale ending is threatened by illness—cancer!

Things take a turn for the worse when the couple learns that they both have it: He has less than two years to live, she has even less! But, can love's romantic sparks infuse optimism and magic in two souls who are already standing at Death's door?

Soaked in tragedy and romantic wanderlust, and boosted by Mulroney and Peet's fine performances, Stone's film is sometimes overwhelmed by sentimental drudgery and tear-jerking contrivances.

But, while it's true that mind-over-matter doesn't always work, the movie's bittersweet tale nevertheless demonstrates man's defiance in the face of adversity.

In their short lifetime, Griffin and Sarah discover the true joys of living and loving—as they jointly take their last shot at happiness.

Changing for the better

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

ONE OF THE MORE IMPORtant activities at the beginning of a new year is to engage in introspection. Organizations realize the necessity of evaluation and goal-setting at this time of the year, and individuals should also go through the same process. Here are some guidelines:

1. Don't be content with looking at what's external. Look deeper into the core of your existence: Your spiritual state and well-being.

Growth

2. The false ego may lure us to entertain grand illusions about ourselves. We don't want our growth to be stunted. The worst thing is for tiny plants to believe that they are giant trees filled with fruits and flowers. We require watering and pruning. We need time to mature.

3. Stop blaming other people for every problem you see. Don't get hung up on criticizing and fault-finding—they don't contribute to growth.

4. Don't cheat. Be honest and sincere. If you're lazy or nasty, admit it. You can only work on a solution if you acknowledge that there's a problem.

Practical plans

5. Focus on yourself and on what you can do to change for the better. Strategize and follow practical plans to achieve the improvements you need. The easiest way to achieve spiritual development in this age of confusion is to meditate and chant the holy names of the Supreme Being.

6. Change doesn't have to be a solitary struggle. Be humble—ask for help. You can't cross the ocean of material existence alone.

7. Don't allow problems to overwhelm you. Learn to trust: Place your life in good hands. The best shelter is at the lotus feet of the Supreme.

'Al' champs aim to please

From page E1

Tonight," the rousing "The Maze," and "The Runaround," the playlist's rock-and-blues opener.

While his eagerness to please doesn't always succeed (take "Just to Feel That Way," for example), Hicks' 12-track recording nevertheless boasts of a well-produced lineup that presents young listeners with an alternative beat—an option to hip-hop, techno or electronica—they can groove to.

Personality

He invests his cover of Marvin Gaye's "Wherever I Lay My Hat" and his other self-penned song, "Soul Thing" (our top pick), with enough energy and personality to make up for the trite but fan-pleasing numbers.

Another notable tune with overt commercial appeal is Diane Warren's radio hit-bound "Places I've Been." However, the exclusion of Taylor's first No. 1 single, "Do I Make You Proud?" and his sizzling cover of "Takin' It to the Streets" are miscalculated omissions.

Less successful in the innovation department is 28-year-old Ruben Studdard's third album, **"The Return,"** in which Season Two's Velvet Teddybear revisits his gospel-and-soul roots. While Clay Aiken, Studdard's more successful runner-up, is making waves waxing one hit album after another, Ruben continues to struggle in the sidelines.

He has yet to fully realize the promise he so valiantly displayed on the talent show—a brilliant singer in search of a distinct sound.

Sharpest cut

In his latest recording (which entered the pop chart at No. 8 and, seven weeks later, stalled at No. 176), Studdard, now 70 lbs lighter, delivers beautifully sung tunes like "Change Me," "Make Ya Feel Beautiful," "Blow Ya Mind" and "What Tha Business Is"—the slickest and sharpest cut in the 14-track lineup.

His technique will remind you of Luther Vandross' smooth, note-perfect crooning. But, while he shines in his remake of "If Only for One Night," many of the songs in the compilation lack the sensual edge, emotional availability and vocal fullness that characterized the popular appeal of Vandross' well-loved singles. His amiable, perfunctory delivery doesn't bring out the spirit of his songs' drip-dried lyrics.

Some of the songs sound downright silly or strangely derivative (In his self-written "To Da Crib," for instance, he sings: "You've got the kind of love that niggers can only dream about."). *Really* now.

For her part, 22-year-old Fantasia Barrino (who—would you believe?—was "functionally illiterate" until her handlers taught her how to read in 2005) made history three years ago when she became the first artist to debut at No. 1 with her first single, "I Believe"—the biggest-selling record of 2004.

Bold move

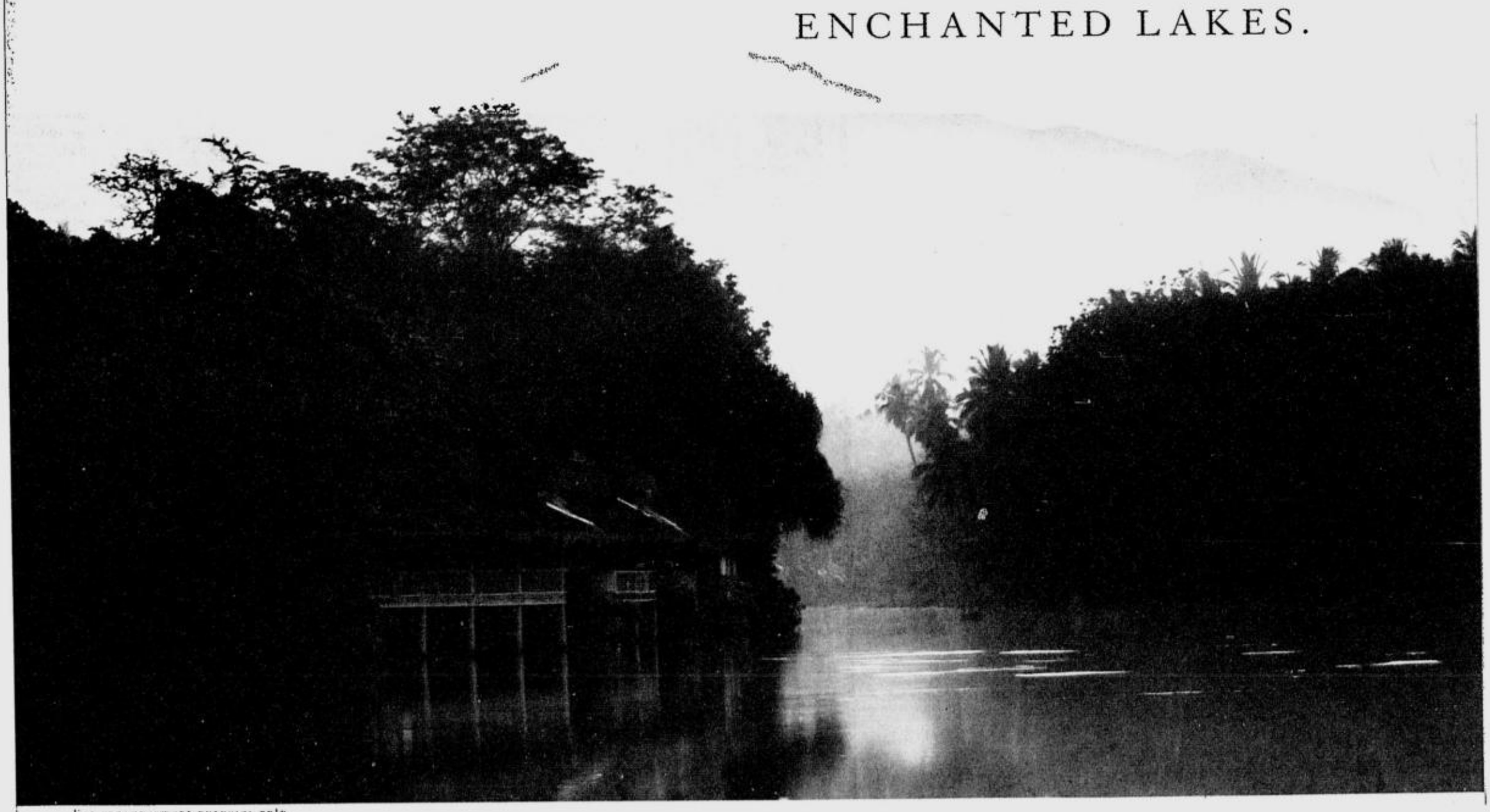
In her latest CD, **"Fantasia,"** the Season Three champ's 14-song follow-up to her successful "Free Yourself" debut, makes a bold move by going full-throttle R&B, and succeeds—at least, musically.

The new disc, however, could only squeak in at No. 19 upon its release—which is a pity, because the album is a magnificent potpourri of songs that smartly utilizes Barrino's lived-in soulfulness and seamless technique. A number of tracks may be melodically wanting, but their complexity demonstrates the singer's enviable vocal control.

"Hood Boy" and "Baby Makin' Hips" are infectious and winsome. "Bore Me," "Two Weeks Notice," "When I See You," and Diane Warren's "I Feel Beautiful" are majestically sung. The rock-styled "Uneligible" and the gospel-inspired "Bump What Ya Friends Say" pack a vocal and emotional wallop.

Just how versatile can you get?

MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS.
ENCHANTED LAKES.



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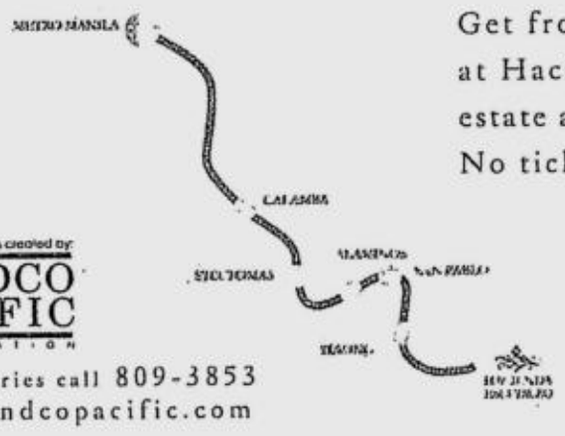

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Laurice Guillen topbills 'The Glass Menagerie'

THE BIG NEWS IN PHILIPPINE THEater this month is the return to the stage of acclaimed actress-director Laurice Guillen in Tanghalang Ateneo's staging of Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie."

Even more auspiciously, Guillen plays the celebrated mother role of Amanda with her own daughters, Anna and Ina, alternating as Laura. Ricky Abad directs. Call 426-600, local 5121.

MONTAGE

More twists and turns in 'Saw 3'

Psychopathic killer Jigsaw turns an abandoned warehouse into a gruesome torture chamber in "Saw 3," the latest installment of the "Saw" horror series.

While detectives scramble to locate him, Dr. Lynn Denilon (Bahar Soomekh) and Jeff (Angus Macfadyen) are unaware that they have become Jigsaw's latest victims. Racing against time, they struggle to make it through each of their vicious tests.

In "Saw 3," Tobin Bell reprises his role as Jigsaw; Shawnee Smith returns as Amanda, and Dina Meyer as Detective Kerry. The film series has developed a cult following with its amazing traps like the jaw-trap in the first film, and the needle pit in the second, which are enthusiastically discussed by fans in online chatrooms.

'An Inconvenient Truth'

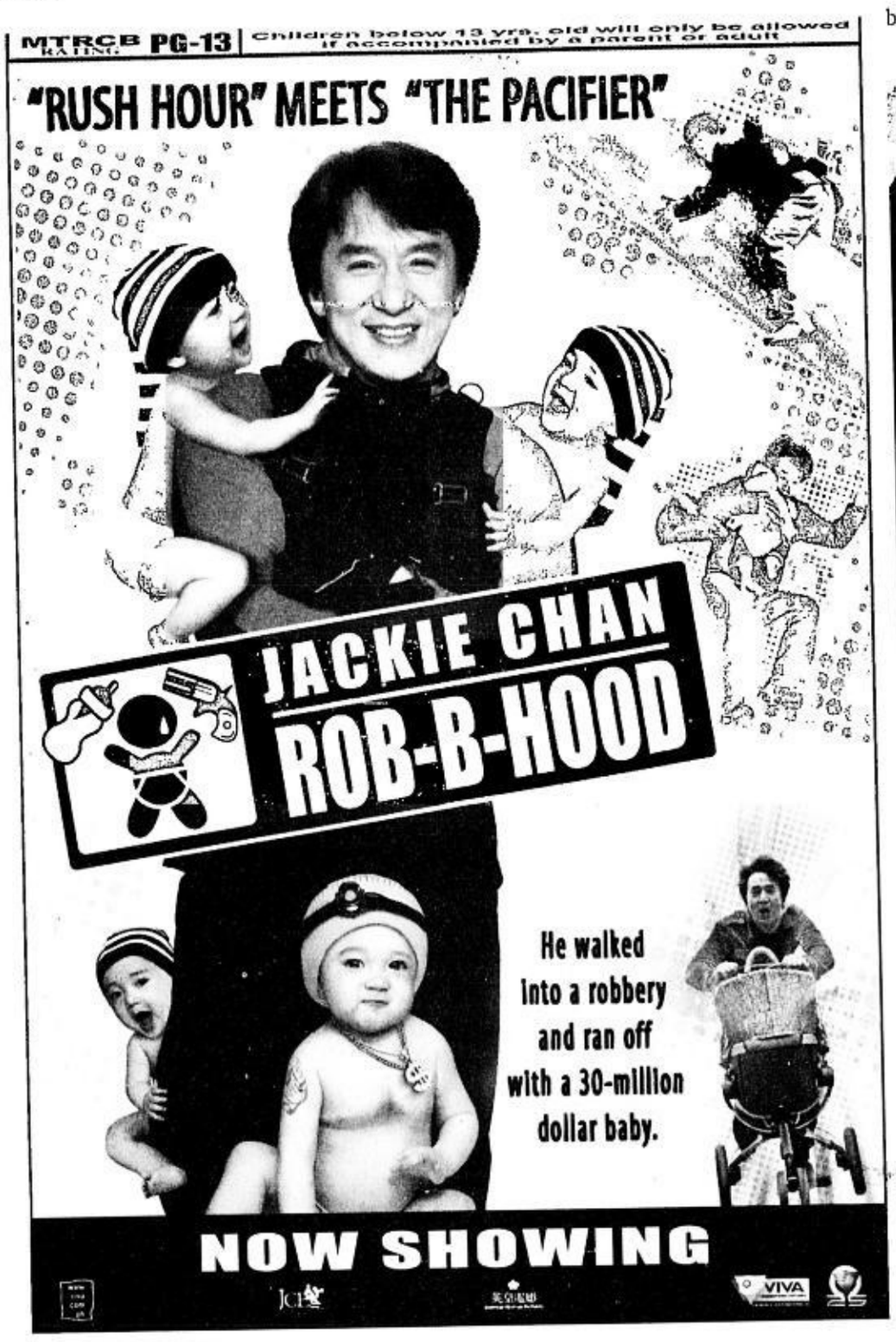
"An Inconvenient Truth" is being reshown at SM Megamall and SM Iloilo until Jan. 16. On Jan. 17, it will be screened at SM Manila and SM Fairview. The acclaimed docu-drama is a cinematic wake-up call to the urgency of the crisis brought about by the devastating consequences of global warming.

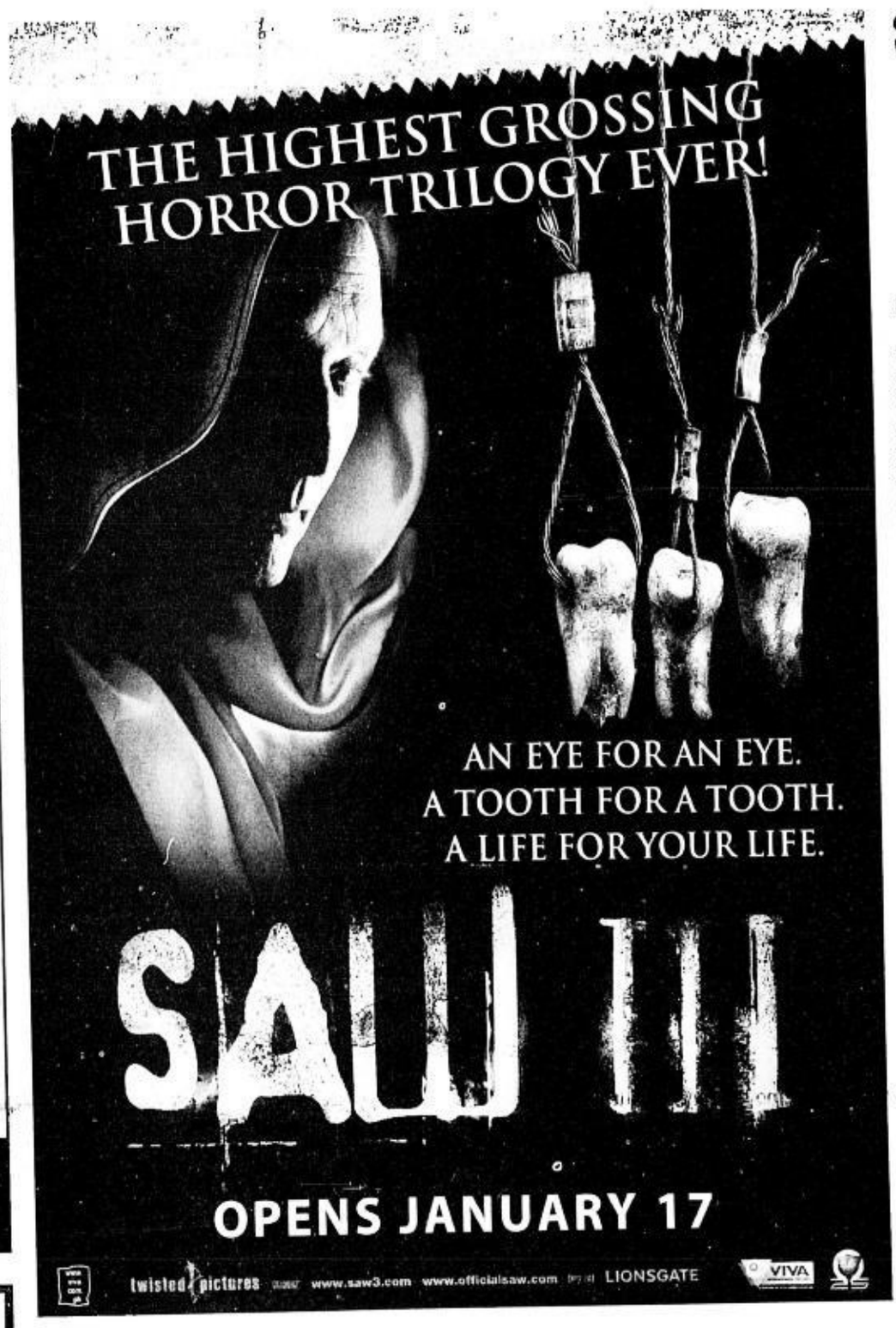
'Chic Eats'

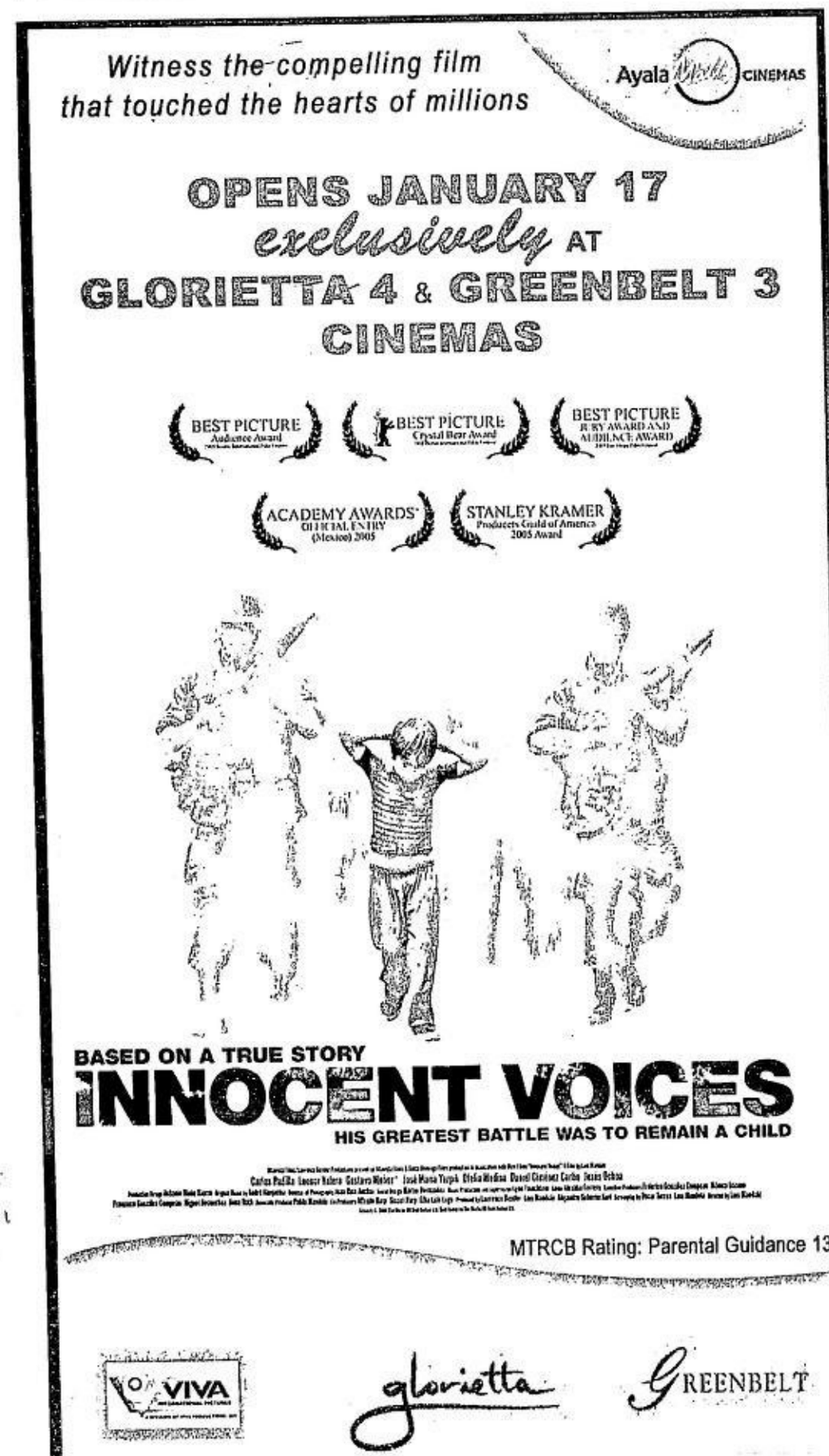
Today at 12 a.m., Discovery Travel & Living's "Chic Eats" features home cooking in Italy. From Rome to sleepy villages in the countryside, the show reveals how hungry travelers are treated to the authentic tastes of traditional Italian homes.

LAURICE/ E7

GUILLEN. Acts with her own daughters, Anna and Ina.







Sending the wrong signals

By Nestor U. Torre

THE METRO MANILA Film Festival finds itself caught up in controversy for the nth time with its jurors' decision to hail "Enteng Kabisote" as best picture in the recent edition of the festival.

What's so controversial about that? Well, it appears that a new rule has been imposed that, to win the best picture award, an entry has to be one of the festival's top grossers.

Most popular

What's so strange about that? Well, best means best, *not* one of the most popular. In redefining the meaning of best, the festival has run counter to the film fest's original intent to showcase the finest movies of the local movie industry—hence, the uproar that its latest gaffe has provoked.

Some people point out that, in recent years, the MMFF has in fact ceased to be the "quality" festival it once was, so its current controversy is really no big shift.

But, the fact that the box-office factor has *officially* been cited as a requisite for consideration for best picture sends a wrong signal that turns quite a number of people off. Best is Best, and any official move to blur that key point can't hope to prosper.

What should be the MMFF's next move? Its prime movers should heed the public and some industry people's negative reaction, and call for a reevaluation of its latest, controversial stipulation.

Good reputation

While they're at it, they could also reevaluate the festival's other controversial aspects, so that the next MMFF will regain the festival's original, good reputation.

Another wrong signal that the 2006 MMFF sent out was the best supporting actress award its jurors gave to Gina Pareño for her over-the-top portrayal of Judy Ann Santos' mother in "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo."

Yes, Gina's performance was colorful, sassy and full of life, but it was also much too much for *kwela* effect, and all over the place.

The excuse for the portrayal's excessive brio was that the character was madcap and even crazy. Fine, but even madness needs some method, some sense of build-up, organization, selectivity, not

SENDING/ E7

More substantial TV programs needed

By Behn Cervantes

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT PHILIPPINE television needs vast and immediate improvement because when you turn on your TV set, you realize why it's referred to as a "boob tube."

The industry's bigwigs should develop a deeper awareness of the role of broadcast media during these trying times.

For starters, note how many "commercial" shows there are compared to serious ones. Ironically, "commercial" has become synonymous with "inane," and the few serious programs we have are often aired so late in the night.

Profit

Why are news reports, interviews, and programs with substantive magazine formats aired so late? The reason, of course, is profit.

For some time, "Debate" had regular viewers because of its fine hosts (Oscar Orbos and Winnie Monsod) and the controversial topics it tackled. Yes, it got hysterical at times, but at least, we could mull over the two sides to a controversial issue.

BELTRAN. Brought out the best in his guests.

The show's original time slot was rather late, but because it was interesting, viewers stayed up. Soon, however, it was shown after midnight, making it impossible for viewers who had to work the next day to wait up for it. If you were Cinderella, your couch would have turned into a *kalabasa*! The audience soon lost interest.

There's hardly any show like "Debate" now. If you want to listen to an interview, you'll have to catch it in the early afternoons.

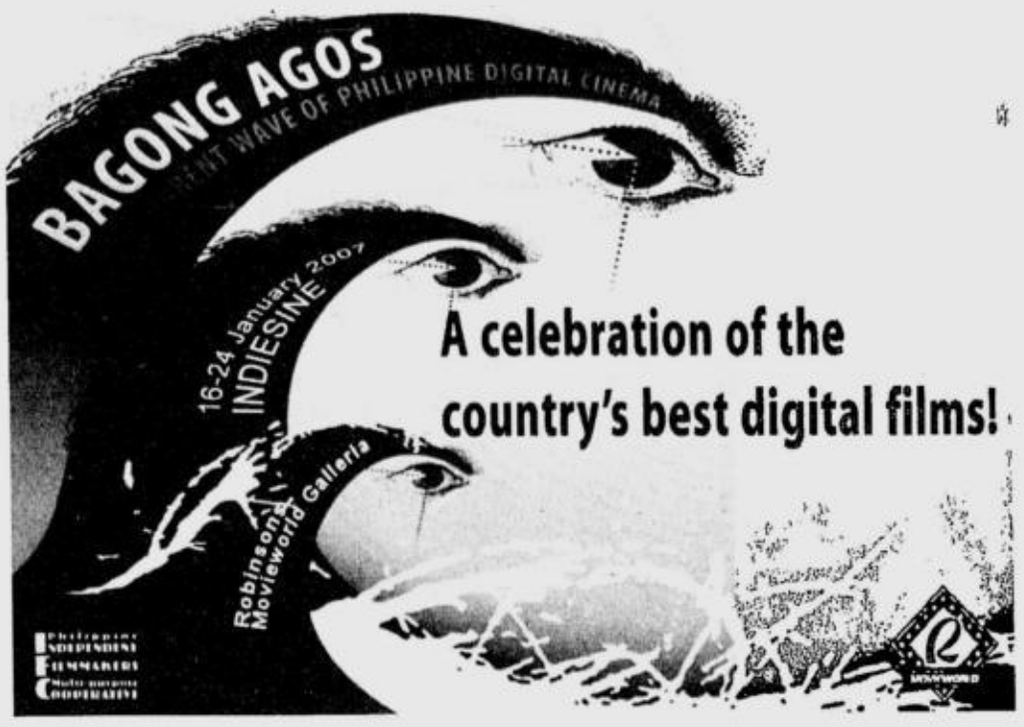
Incisive

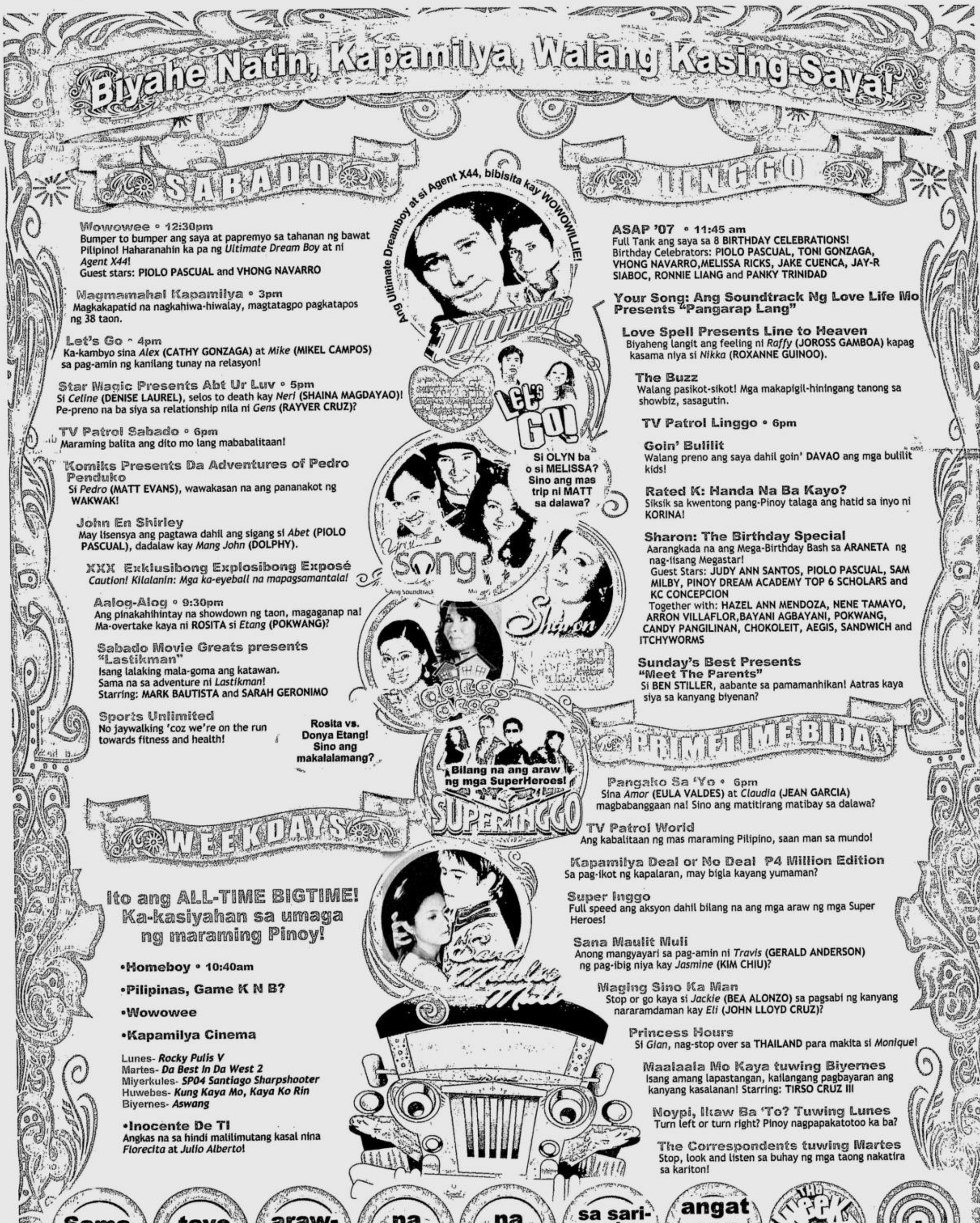
Certainly, Cito Beltran was a lively host who brought out the best in his guests. Since his questions were incisive, Cito's show was among the best of its kind. Why, oh why was it pulled off the air while gossip programs continue to plague TV viewers?

I wish networks would give better hours to such shows as "The Correspondents," "Reporter's Notebook" and "Probe." Cheche Lazaro's show on media concerns is equally substantive and deserves greater studio support.

Since TV is an audio-visual medium, I

MORE/ E2





STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

The people's doctors

PHYSICIANS MARTY MAGSANOC and Willie and Liza Ong, along with nurse Rhoda R. Redulla, have written the book, "Expanded Medicine Blue Book," which was written to ensure accuracy of drug dosages that are compatible with accepted standards of treatment.

Boy Abunda helped conceptualized the TV show, "Makabayang Duktor," which Willie and Liza host on NBN-4.

Recently, Willie, 42, was featured in Reader's Digest Asia in an article that chronicled the exodus of Filipino physicians to work abroad.

Shortage

Because the country faces a shortage of doctors and nurses, the medical specialist introduced the "Doctor's Covenant," in which local doctors sign a document to stay and serve the country for at least three years before they seek greener pastures abroad.

Last July, Willie and Liza inaugurated the Co Tec Tai Medical Museum. The museum shows the development of medicine in the country, from Spanish times to the present.

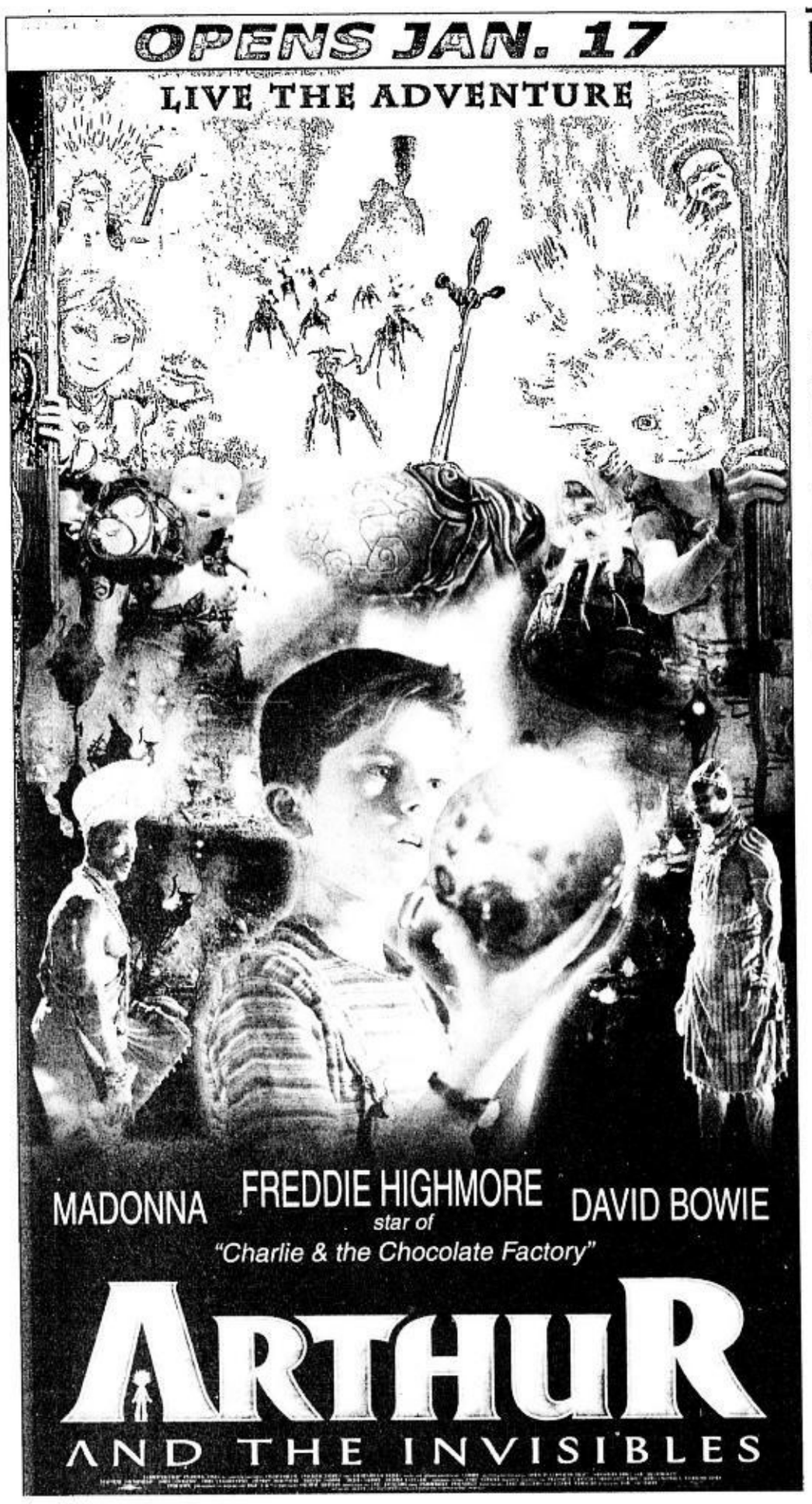
Call Julie Alonzo at 833-0215 or 0917 813-9186.

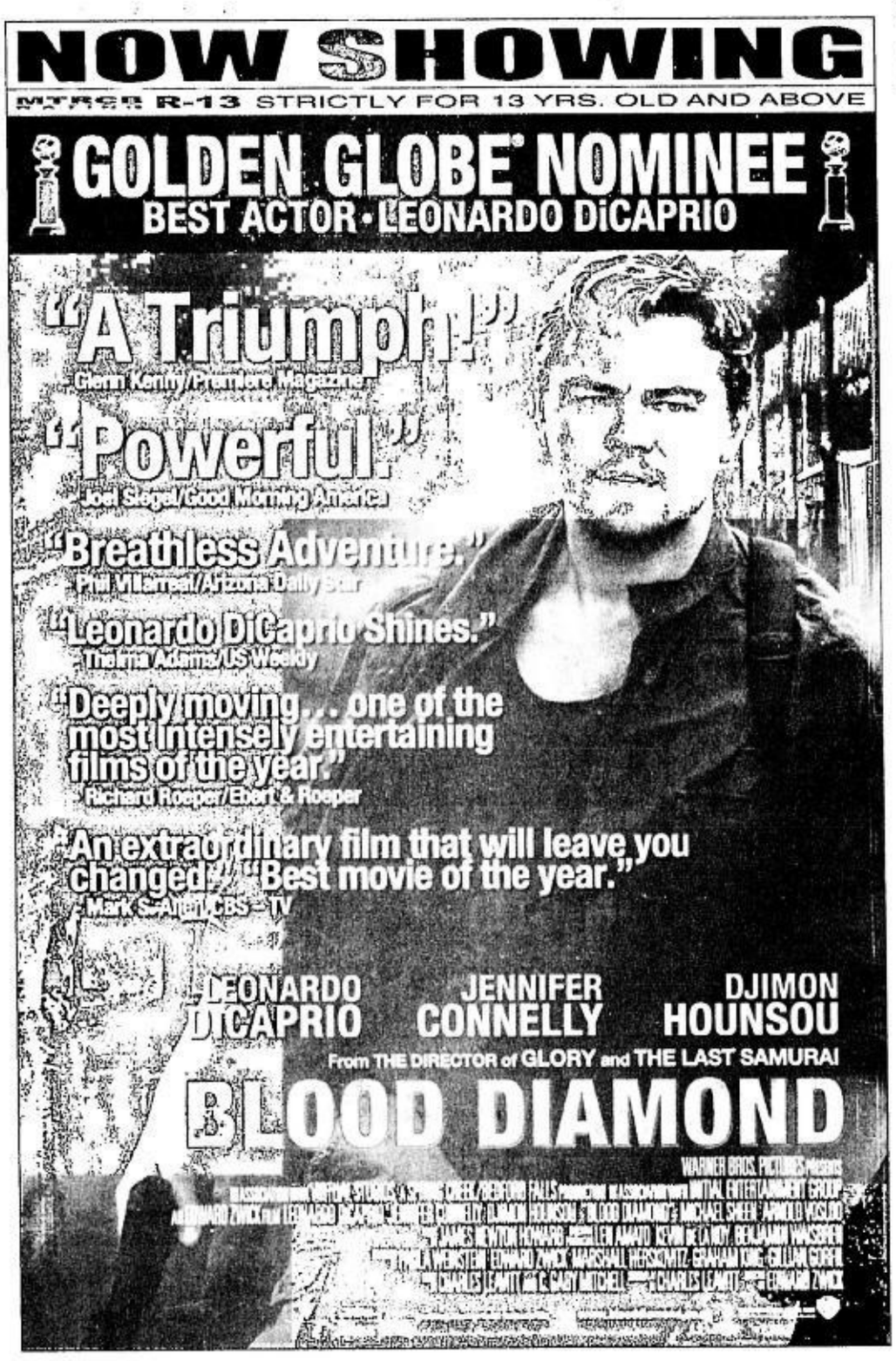
* * *

Join the Mandy Navasero Batanes Photo Safari either from April 5 to 8 or from April 14 to 17.

E-mail mandy-navasero@yahoo.com.ph, or call 899-1767.

THE ONGS and Magsanoc have co-authored new medical book.





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G4 GLORIETTA 4	ROB-B-HOOD	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	ERAGON	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	ERAGON	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
GB1 GREENBELT 1	BLOOD DIAMOND		ERAGON	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
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ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	ERAGON	BLOOD DIAMOND	ROB-B-HOOD	FEAST
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	ERAGON		GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	
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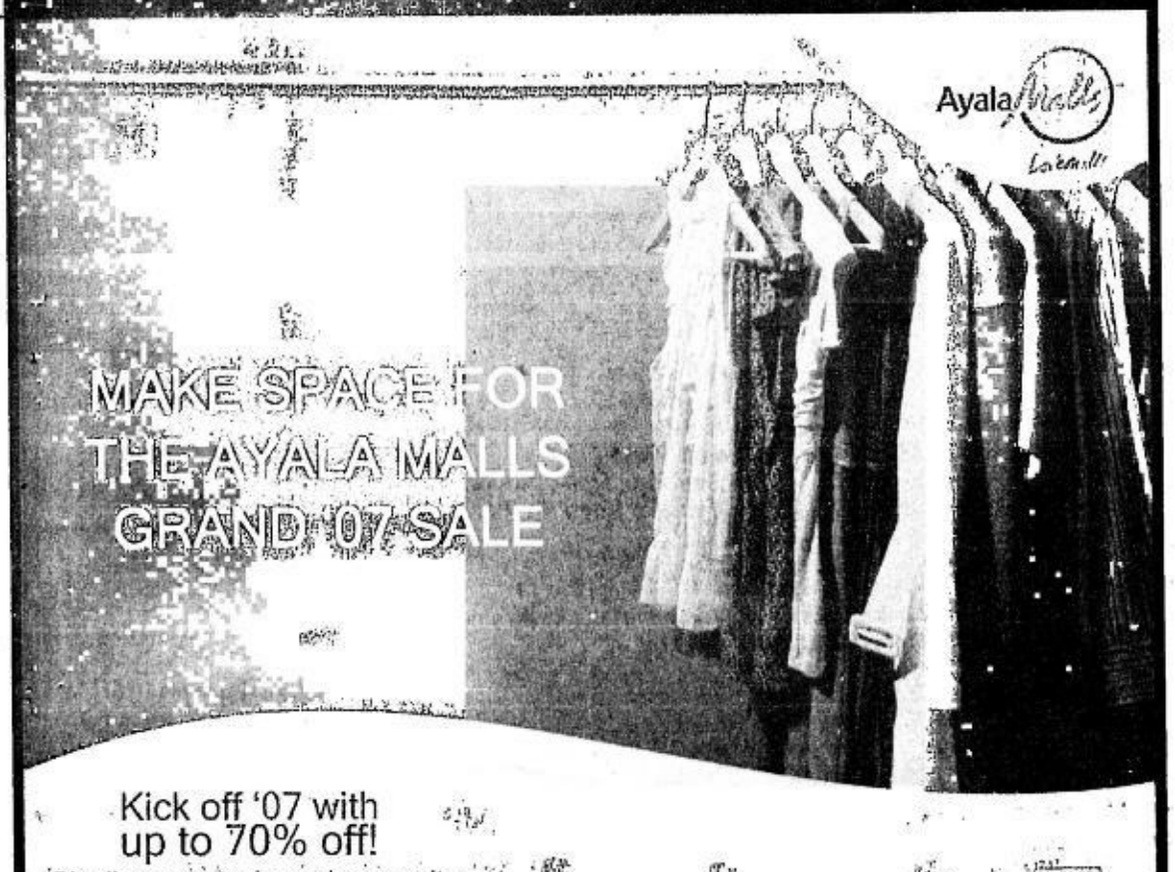

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--- Richard Roeper and Guest Critic/EBERT & ROEPER

★★★★
"This is one of the year's best films!"
--- Norm Wilner / METRO TORONTO

"... MAGIC..."
--- Peter Travers / ROLLING STONE

★★★★
"BRILLIANT!"
--- Shawn Edward / FOX-TV

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

Will Ferrell
Stranger than Fiction

Emma Thompson | Dustin Hoffman
Maggie Gyllenhaal | Queen Latifah

COLUMBIA PICTURES

glorietta GREENBELT

Laurice Guillen...

From page E4

'After Aida' at Teatrino

Jaime del Mundo is mounting a semi-staged production of Julian Mitchell's "After Aida" at the Teatrino in Greenhills tonight. Five actors, five singers and one pianist will join forces to tell the amazing story behind the creation of Verdi's operatic masterpiece, "Otello." Call 900-7023.

Dyords Javier

To complement his first album, "Puede," ace comic Dyords Javier has launched his concert series, "Dyords Ko Po," which will be performed on Jan. 16, 23, 30 and Feb. 6 and 20 at the Teatrino in Greenhills.

Movies on TV

On HBO, today at 9 p.m., "Doom." Tomorrow at 9:45 a.m., "Ed TV." Jan. 15 at 12:30 p.m., "Carlito's Way." Jan. 16 at 9 p.m., "The River Wild." Jan. 17 at 7 p.m., "Wimbledon." Jan. 18 at 7 p.m., "Monster-in-Law." Jan. 19 at 7 p.m., "Beetlejuice."

On Cinemax, today at 9 p.m., "Beyond Borders." Tomorrow at 6 a.m., "Catch-22." Jan. 15 at 6:30 a.m., "Jason and the Argonauts." Jan. 16 at 3:15 p.m., "The School of Rock." Jan. 17 at 2:55 a.m., "Alfie" (1966). Jan 18 at 6 a.m., "Arabesque." Jan. 19 at 2;55 p.m., "The Wild Bunch."

JAVIER. Releases new album, "Puede."

Sending the wrong signals

From page E4

just *lukaret* shticks for their own sake.

Popular appeal

We don't discount the popular appeal of Gina's over-the-top performance, but we don't believe that it merits an award for quality and "excellence."

Perhaps the key problem here is that, through the years and for all sorts of reasons, the MMFF has generally ceased to be a showcase for the best movies that Filipino filmmakers are capable of producing. That's why the festival is now at a new low, has been watered down by all sorts of compromises, and exists mainly for money-making purposes.

The only way that the MMFF can be saved from itself is for industry and public outcry to force it to return to its original, sterling standards of yore. Failing that, the MMFF is doomed to become a glossy irrelevance.

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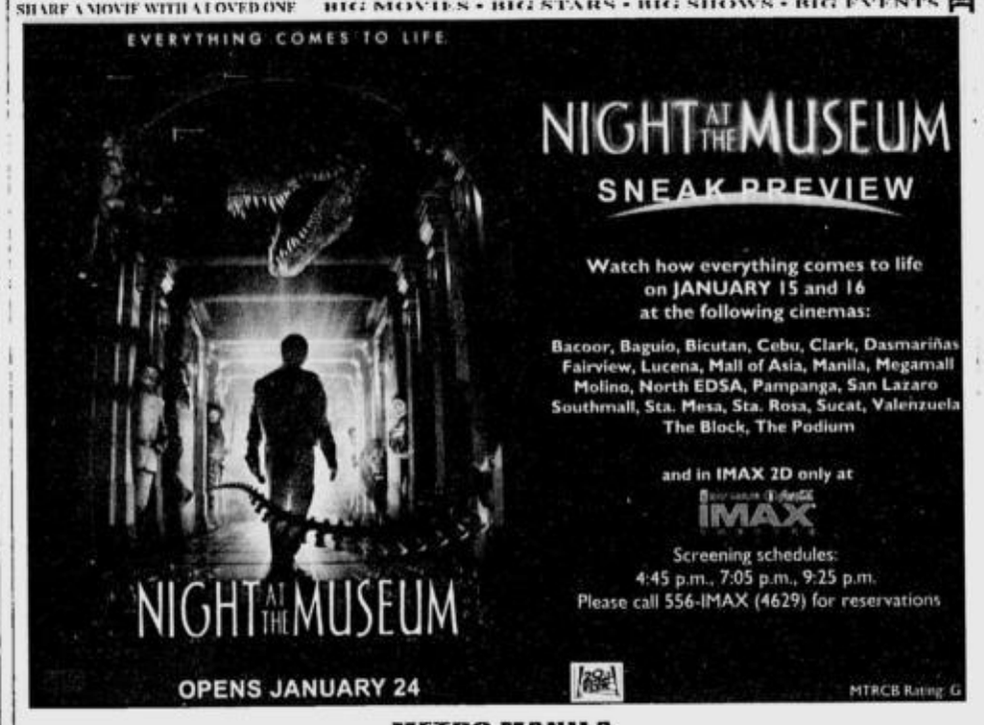

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
IMAX
T-REX IN 3D Admission Fee- P200
11:45AM 1:00PM 2:15PM 3:00PM 6:00PM 7:15PM
SANTA VS THE SNOWMAN 4:45PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
HAPY FEET IN 2D 8:30PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 ERAGON
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
PREMIERE CINEMA
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
CENTERSTAGE
ROB-B-HOOD
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
BLOOD DIAMOND
CINEMA 2
ERAGON
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 ERAGON
2 MANO PO 5
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ROB-B-HOOD
7 ERAGON
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 ERAGON
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
8 MANO PO 5
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 LIGALIG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 ROB-B-HOOD
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 MANO PO 5

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
8 LIGALIG
9 MANO PO 5
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 ERAGON
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
9 MANO PO 5

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 ERAGON
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ERAGON
7 SUPER NOYPI
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11 MANO PO 5
12 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ERAGON
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 MANO PO 5
8 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9837681-85
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ERAGON
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 FEAST
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 THE RETURN
2 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 RESERVED
6 ERAGON
7 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 ERAGON
2 THE RETURN
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BOA
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 ERAGON
2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 FEAST

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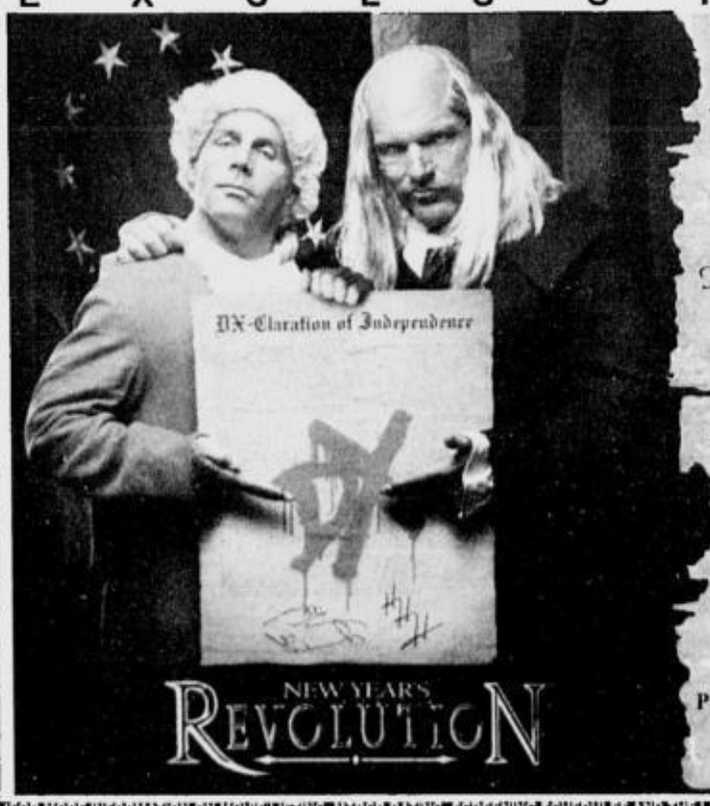

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 ERAGON • THX
2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30

2 BLOOD DIAMOND
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

4 ERAGON
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

5 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

7 MANO PO 5
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

9 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50

10 LIGALIG
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

ERMITA 538-7809 to 12

1 ERAGON
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:35 9:00

2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:35 3:40 6:45 9:50

4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 ROB-B-HOOD
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 ERAGON
12:30 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20

3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

4 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:35 6:20 9:05

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:00 6:40 9:00

6 ERAGON
11:00 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00

7 ERAGON
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

8 BLOOD DIAMOND
11:20 2:30 5:40 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

PIONEER 687-5378

1 ERAGON
1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20

2 BLOOD DIAMOND
12.05 2.55 5.45 8:35

3 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20

4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 LIGALIG
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KAMASUTRA 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332
1 LIGALIG
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 MANO PO 5

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
1 KAMASUTRA 3
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 ERAGON

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ERAGON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3/SHAKE RATTLE
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6 THE RETURN

ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 THE RETURN
5 KAMASUTRA 3
6 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS

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Acting with the best of them

AVELLANA. The very soul of artistic generosity.

SILAYAN. Only unleashed his emotions during opening night.

By Nestor U. Torre

BEFORE I CONCENTRATED on writing and directing, I cut my theater teeth as an actor. "Blame" it on the good genes I got from my folks, and on the fact that I was an only child until I was 12.

When you're the only kid in the house, you tend to lack for playmates your age and have to entertain yourself by creating complex stories in which you play all of the characters—thus inadvertently honing your thespic skills.

First lead role

So, I was only in Grade Three when I was tapped to play my first lead role in a play—as the Prince, no less.

In high school at the Ateneo de Cagayan, I was deemed to be so "promising" as an actor that I was already being cast in college productions.

Right after college, I studied abroad and was cast in lead roles in productions in the States and England.

It was only after I got back from my masteral studies abroad that I finally acted in Manila theater. Thanks to a rave review "to die for" from Morli Dharam of one of my earlier performances, leading directors went on to cast me in a series of challenging productions—as many as 12 in one year!

One of the most welcome fruits of all those plays and musicals directed by Tinio, Avellana, Reuter, Cervantes, Espejo, Gosiengfao, Amador, Bacon, Joaquin, Ansencio, Kane, Tison and other top directorial lights of the day was the opportunity for me to act with the finest actors in the land.

I learned a lot from them, and benefited greatly not just from crafting good theater with them, but also from getting to know and like them as friends and colleagues.

It was most exciting to act with the late, great Vic Silayan, because he held his thespic cards close to his chest during rehearsals and only unleashed his emotions during opening night. So, you really had to be on your toes as an actor to avoid getting thoroughly swamped by his thespic brio!

Rightful place

On the distaff side, now National Artist Daisy Avellana was the very soul of artistic generosity, both as performer and director. You were in no danger of being upstaged by her, because she knew her rightful place in a production.

One of my most challenging acting assignments was when National Artist Rolando Tinio tapped me as the only male actor in an evening of two of his award-winning one-act plays: "Claudia and Her Mother" and "It's April, What Are We Doing Here?"

It was a great honor, but it was also doubly challenging because I was cast opposite two luminous and intense actresses, the legendary

TINIO. One challenging role after another.
CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO

Tita Muñoz and the formidable Mitos Sison. I really had to work hard to keep up with them, and the plays enjoyed a triumphant run.

I also learned a lot from sharing scenes with the gifted and celebrated likes of Aurelio Estanislao, Celeste Legaspi, Tommy Abuel, Laurice Guillen, Ronaldo Valdez, Barbara Perez, Edgar Oira, Baby Barredo, Babsy Paredes, Behn Cervantes, Margot Pimentel, Mitch Valdes, Maricris Tabora, Conrad Parham, Ella Luansing, Howard Collins, Maan Hontiveros, Juno Henares, Zeneida Amador—etc!

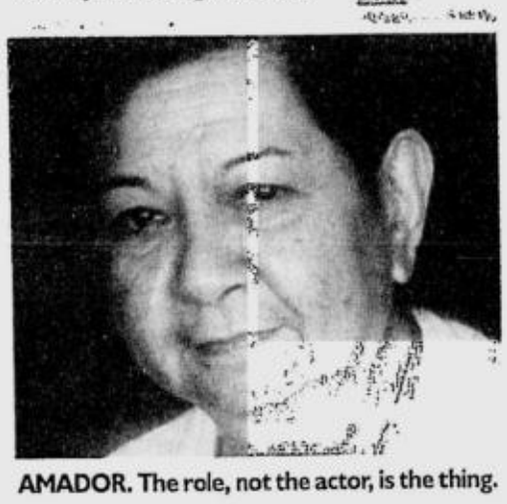
Bed scene

The enumeration momentarily stops with Bibot Amador, because I recall that I was the only actor to share a bed scene, ahem, with butch Bibot—and we were both in our (period) underwear, to boot!

From Bibot, I learned that the role, not the actor, is the thing, and that we must all strive mightily to make the improbable look and feel like the most natural and believable performance in the world!

As I tell my acting, writing and directing workshoppers these days, I consider myself extremely fortunate because I joined Philippine theater when it was peopled by true artists who loved and lived for their art.

I learned a lot from them, and it is this selfless tradition of artistry and service that I have tried to hand down to my own actors. Let's hope that the great tradition is carried forward by the next generation!



AMADOR. The role, not the actor, is the thing.

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ERAGON 12:20 / 1:10 / 2:40 / 3:30 / 5:00 / 5:50 / 7:20 / 8:10 / 9:50	ROB-B-HOOD 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 1:05 / 4:00 / 6:55 / 9:50	GLP PLATINUM CINEMA
	HAPPY FEET 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 1:40 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:40	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	ERAGON 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

MiMALL 5

ERAGON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30	ROB-B-HOOD 12:40 / 3:30 / 5:20 / 8:10	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 12:35 / 2:30 / 5:25 / 8:20
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:00 / 3:35 / 6:10 / 8:45	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

MR WORLD
PHILIPPINES 2007
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The Pancit Canton that Offers a Real Plus!

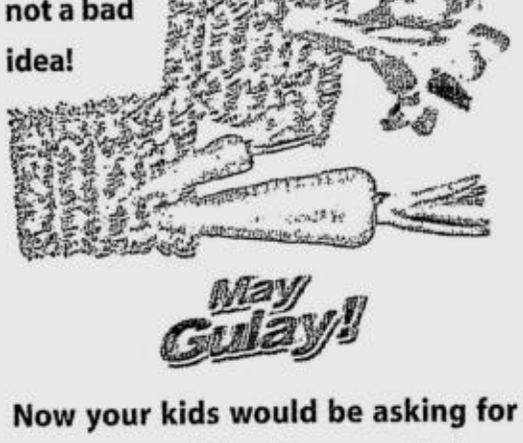
"Eat Your Vegetables!"

We're all familiar with this statement from our parents or grandparents. As protectors of our children's health, we now find ourselves saying the same thing to our seemingly "veggie-wary" kids. But somehow, kids being kids, they always manage to dodge eating vegetables, depriving themselves of improved nutrition. They either shove the pechay out of their plate, or simply flick the carrot out of the dish being served. If only there was a delicious way of getting our kids to take the essential

nutrients that "hard-to-eat-vegetables" offer.

Thanks to Zest-O Corporation's newest breakthrough, Quickchow Veggie Plus Pancit Canton, **the 1st with real vegetables in the noodles.** Now, kids can benefit from higher nutritional levels acquired from vegetables in the form that they enjoy most.

Just imagine real vegetables like pechay and carrot fused into the pancit canton noodles your kids love... not a bad idea!



May Gulay!

Now your kids would be asking for more vegetables like never before. (Of course in the form of Quickchow Veggie Plus Pancit Canton which is sure to enhance your child's appetite with proper nutritional values.)

It's not surprising that Zest-O Corporation has unleashed another first, given it's feat of introducing two of the country's most monumental innovations -- the vitamin-fortified Zest-O ready-to-drink juice and Zest-O Choc-O, the first chocolate milk drink in Steri Pak.

Now kids all over would probably be hearing another type of dining table reminder.

"Enjoy your vegetables!"

Thanks to Quickchow Veggie Plus Pancit Canton

Also available: Quickchow Veggie Plus Instant Mami!

LIFESTYLE / C1

Sunday Sizzlers:
What's cool, what's crass, what's good, bad, what's some kind of wonderful and what's not?

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Gospel of Beauty,
according to pulchritude guru Vicky Belo who talks about glorifying it, making it available to anyone who wants it.

ENTERTAIMENT / E4

Who are seated with whom
and where among the 1,000 guests at the Golden Globes Awards? All eyes will be on Brad and Angelina who get the No. 1 table. But why? Watch it on Jan. 16.

GLOBAL PINOY / A20

A Muslim engineer-OFW,
envisioning a nation without slums, returns to his hometown of Patikul, Sulu, to build low-cost houses and rebuild lives and his community.

Speaking 2 languages helps delay dementia

OTTAWA, CANADA—Speaking two languages can delay forgetting that you speak two languages.

People who are fully bilingual and speak both languages every

SPEAKING/ A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, January 14, 2007 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 37 P18 website: inquirer.net

Leviste had 'love-hate' relationship with victim

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMER BATANGAS Gov. Tony Leviste and his administrative officer whom he admitted to shooting dead on Friday was, according to a daughter of the slain man, "like a married couple who fight then make up."

Dina Sanchez, daughter of Rafael de las Alas, 68, yesterday told the INQUIRER that the family

LEVISTE/ A6

Asean inks terror pact

'NEATH SHELTERING PALMS, the summit hall at the Mactan Shangri-La is superimposed as the background of this photo illustration of the heads of state led by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo posing for a souvenir shot of the 12th Asean Summit. From left, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodia's Hun Sen, Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Laos's Bouasone Bouphavanh, Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Burma's (Myanmar's) Lt. Gen. Soe Win, Thailand's Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont and Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. EDWIN BACASMAS/AFP

It may be used as basis to extradite suspects

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Volt Contreras

SOUTHEAST ASIAN leaders yesterday signed the first legally binding Convention on Counterterrorism that would make it easier to prosecute and extradite terror suspects. *(See key points on Page A5.)*

At its 12th annual summit, the 10 leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also agreed to discuss a plan to form a more cohesive, rules-based organization similar to the European Union that is able to sanction and even expel members that did not follow its policies.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, in her keynote address at the Mactan Summit Hall, set the tone of the gathering, declaring that "Asean is committed to expanding its trade forum to become the largest in the world." The leaders have planned to accelerate moves to form the Asean Economic Community by 2015.

"The unequivocal commitment of regional leaders to peace, stability and economic prosperity for their peoples will continue to mark a caring and sharing regional community sailing through a challenging sea," the President said.

The Asean Convention on Counterterrorism—one of five agreements signed yesterday—was the first in

ASEAN/ A11

WHAT'S INSIDE

WANTED FOR KILLING of leftists in her home country, Spain arrests widow of Juan Peron and former president of Argentina, Isabel Peron, now 75.

WORLD / A21

Isagani Cruz:
The ponencia on the custody of US Marine Daniel Smith has been reduced to an academic lesson on how to interpret the law correctly but without antagonizing the Palace and the US Embassy.

OPINION / A12

No price tag for Cebu gains in summit

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CEBU CITY—THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF Cebu province's hosting of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit is "immeasurable" compared to Malacañang's estimate of P1.2 billion, according to a local business leader.

Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo on Friday said the influx of domestic and foreign delegates during the summit was expected to raise that amount, in additional sales to local businesses.

But Francis O. Monera, president of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said in an interview that was just for the short-term.

"Of course, we do promote the province as an investment location and tourist destination with or without the summit," Monera said.

In a statement, Romulo said the number of flights at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport had increased by about 6 percent after local firms increased operations while the number of passengers passing through the airport went up by 14 percent.

Romulo added that in the runup to the Asean summit season, visitor arrivals in Cen-

NO PRICE/ A8

"That unequivocal commitment of regional leaders to peace, stability and economic prosperity for their peoples will continue to mark a caring and sharing regional community sailing through a challenging sea," the President said.

The Asean Convention on Counterterrorism—one of five agreements signed yesterday—was the first in

ASEAN/ A11

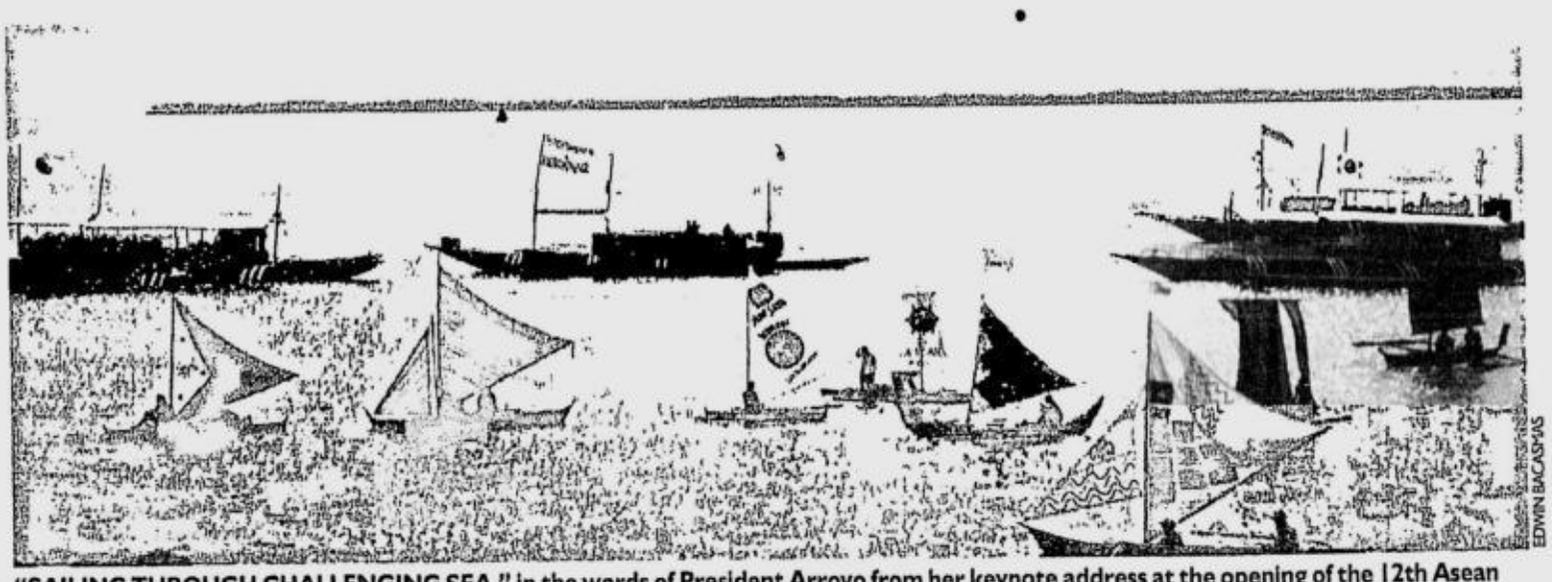
MJ accused Perez of plunder in '02 affidavit

By Norman Bordadora

WHY IS MARK JIMENEZ SATISfied with the Ombudsman's findings recommending bailable charges of extortion and graft against ex-Justice Secretary Hernando Perez when he actually charged the latter with plunder before the antigraft agency in 2002?

Contrary to Jimenez's recent statements to reporters that he had charged Perez only with extortion and graft, a signed copy of his complaint-affidavit submitted to the Ombudsman showed that he had asked that the then justice secretary be primarily charged with plunder, a nonbailable of-

MJ ACCUSED/ A6



"SAILING THROUGH CHALLENGING SEA," in the words of President Arroyo from her keynote address at the opening of the 12th Asean Summit on Saturday, refers to the 10 heads of state's commitment to a sharing, caring regional community. The view of boats, which bear the flags of the Asean member nations and their Asian dialogue partners, is seen from the summit hall on the grounds of the Mactan Shangri-La. EDWIN BACASMAS

Defensor sounds silly, says Erap prosecutor

By Norman Bordadora and Armand Nocum

CHIEF OF STAFF MICHAEL DEfensor was yesterday advised to stop using the issue of a possible release for deposed President Joseph Estrada for his political ends.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said there was no way Estrada can be released on recognizance, as Defensor has been urging.

"That's a common problem among non-lawyers who talk on purely legal issues. They end up looking silly," he said.

Legal issues should be better left to the judiciary, he said.

Villa-Ignacio said the Sandiganbayan special division which is trying the disgraced leader has long denied Estrada's motion for bail.

The defense panel itself has withdrawn its motion for recog-

DEFENSOR/ A5

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be mostly cloudy with light rains.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/13/07

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rainy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Rainy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Rainy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Rainy

Raps filed vs JI, MILF leaders in blasts

By Charlie Señase and Aquiles Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—POLICE OFFICIALS OF CENtral Mindanao have filed murder charges against an alleged local operative of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and two Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commanders in connection with the two bombings here that left one person dead and eight others wounded.

Supt. Paniares Adap, Cotabato City police chief, said those charged were Basit Usman, an alleged JI operative, and Said Pakiladato and Ameril Ombra Kato, all ranking MILF rebel commanders operating in Central Mindanao.

"These are the personalities that came out of our investigation," Adap said.

But Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the information gathered by the police against Pakiladato and Kato was "tainted by politics."

He said the two rebel leaders, known to be considered political enemies of a powerful clan in Maguindanao, "have been politically framed."

Adap said the MILF could help Pakiladato and Kato prove their innocence by allowing them to stand trial. He said the MILF could turn over the two accused rebel leaders to police authorities.

Under an agreement signed by the government and the MILF in connection with the peace process, the rebel group is bound to help the administration in its campaign against terrorists and criminal syndicates.

Kabalu said the MILF was doing its own investigation.

In General Santos City, city police director Senior Supt. Alfredo Toroctocon, said that Indonesian Nicolas Keramis, 35, was invited for questioning following Wednesday's blast in the city that killed six people and wounded 36 others.

Toroctocon disputed reports that Keramis had been arrested. "We don't consider him a suspect yet. He was not arrested, he was just invited for questioning," Toroctocon said.

But he added that the police had received information that Keramis, who was taken from his home in Calumpang village around 11 p.m. Friday, had links to JI finance officer Elmer Amran.

Amran was one of the principal suspects in the December 2004 public market explosion in General Santos City which killed 17 people and injured 80 others.

Keramis, Toroctocon claimed, was also a suspect in a bomb attack staged by the JI in Ternate, Indonesia.

He said officials from the Indonesian consulate in Davao City would be coming over to see Keramis for questioning.

The police crime laboratory in Central Mindanao has discovered that the explosives used in Wednesday's attack in General Santos were packed into a water pump tube, which was loaded with ball bearings, nails and other metal fragments. These were set off using a cell phone as a trigger device.

Chief Supt. German Doria, Central Mindanao police chief, said the bomb used in the General Santos blast differed from those used in the Cotabato City and the Kidapawan City bombings.

He said in the Cotabato City explosion, the bomb was fashioned out of an 81-millimeter mortar while a grenade was used in the Kidapawan explosion.

Doria said the findings made it difficult for the police to conclude that the attacks were carried out by a single group. *With a report from Allan Nawal, Inquirer Mindanao*

Barangay captains' chief shot dead in Isabela

By Villamor Visaya Jr.,
Inquirer Northern Luzon

ILAGAN, ISABELA—THE president of the Association of Barangay Captains in Naguilian town was shot dead by a gunman on Friday night.

Chief Insp. Antonio Marallag Jr., chief of the Isabela police's investigation and intelligence division, said Dandy Dios Pascual, 42, sustained bullet wounds in the head and body and died while being taken to the Isabela Doctors General Hospital in this capital town, about 20 km from where he was shot, at about 8:30 p.m.

Marallag said the attack on Pascual, barangay captain of Sunlife in Naguilian, took place more than a year after he survived an ambush in July 2005.

At close range

Police said Pascual was walking toward his car after leaving the family-owned BK Videoke Bar when the suspect, who was armed with .45-cal. handgun, approached and shot him at close range.

On July 3, 2005, Pascual and his mother, Esther, were on their way home when they were ambushed by gunmen in Barangay Surcoc in Naguilian. The mother was killed in that attack.

Ombudsman to sack 'Peewee,' other Pasay execs, Gov. Tupas

By Norman Bordadora

A HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL OF the Department of Interior and Local Government yesterday confirmed that the Ombudsman had ordered the department to inform Iloilo Gov. Neil Tupas as well as suspended Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad and the city's nine other suspended elected officials that they had been dismissed from the service following adverse decisions in their cases.

The source, who declined to be named because the orders the DILG received had yet to be served on the local officials, said the Ombudsman had also directed the DILG to inform Jaen, Nueva Ecija, Mayor Prospero Esquivel that he also had been sacked.

"We've received the order from the Ombudsman to dismiss the mayor of Jaen, Nueva Ecija; Peewee (Trinidad), (Pasay) Vice Mayor Tony Calixto and the eight suspended councilors and Neil Tupas of Iloilo," the official told the INQUIRER.

Not under election ban

"This is not covered by the election ban on sanctions on elected officials because these are orders to dismiss. These are already sanctions, not preventive suspensions, to keep them from influencing the investigation of the cases against them," the official added.

Suspend Batangas gov

The source also said that less than an hour before the close of office hours on Friday, the DILG received from the Ombudsman an order to suspend Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez. *(See related story in Across the Nation, Page A17)*

"That has to be studied by our legal department if it can still be implemented in light of the election ban on sanctions on elected officials," the official said.

TRINIDAD

The Omnibus Election Code prohibits the dismissal or suspension of officials during the election period. The election period officially started today and will end on June 13.

The officials to be dismissed, the source said, would be informed of the Ombudsman's decision on their cases and that they would be considered dismissed starting tomorrow.

"Peewee's (dismissal) will be served at home because of his suspension. Neil's will be at the capitol," the official said.

Immediate implementation

Esquivel was found guilty of grave misconduct for illegally dismissing a tenured water district official while Trinidad and his city officials were found guilty of graft in connection with garbage collection contracts that were allegedly disadvantageous to the local government.

Graft charges were also leveled against Tupas.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno on Friday also ordered the immediate implementation of preventive suspension orders slapped by the Ombudsman on Mayors Joel Panaligan of Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro; Ricardo Evangelista of Aguilar, Pangasinan, and Joniper Villegas of Vallahermoso, Negros Occidental, for offenses ranging from illegal dismissals to unauthorized use of public funds.

In separate directives, Puno also ordered the DILG regional and provincial directors concerned to carry out the suspension of these local chief executives, in compliance with the endorsements of the Ombudsman that were officially released on Jan. 11 and 12.

The Ombudsman ordered the DILG on Jan. 12 to suspend Panaligan for six months without pay after he was found liable for simple misconduct in connection with an administrative complaint accusing him of falsifying the payroll of casual employees of the Sangguniang Bayan.

Under investigation

Evangelista was placed under preventive suspension by the Ombudsman. He is under investigation for dishonesty and misconduct in connection with his alleged unauthorized use of the Special Education Fund for his municipality.

Villegas was found guilty of misconduct by the Ombudsman for the illegal dismissal of municipal employees, which carries a penalty of suspension from office for a period of six months and one day without pay.

Angara calls for signing of 'January Covenant' for honest, peaceful May polls

By Cynthia D. Balana, Christian V. Esguerra and Norman Bordadora

SEN. EDGARDO ANGARA YESTERDAY called for the signing of a "January Covenant" by the major political parties to ensure clean and peaceful national and local elections in May.

"Candidates seeking public office and parties vying for electoral primacy are key elements of the electoral process. But over and above this is the need to make sure that the May 2007 elections are clean, fraud-free and untainted," Angara said.

The covenant was necessary, he explained, stressing that this year's elections "may be the last window of opportunity left for democracy's survival."

Any taint on the election results, he added, might reopen previous doubts about the sanctity of the electoral process and the conduct of previous electoral exercises.

"A widespread public impression that the results of the May 2007 elections were less than honest and beyond question would have grievous consequences and I doubt if our fragile democratic experiment would be able to withstand the tremors," Angara said.

The political community should realize that there might not be another election after the May 2007 elections if massive fraud was associated with its results, he said, adding: "Democracy will not survive another fraudulent elections."

Angara said that his party, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), could draft the proposed covenant in consultation with other major political parties.

Also on electoral reforms, Senate President Manny Villar, president of the Nacionalista Party, said the Senate was set to tackle pending legislation despite the fact that he and other senators are up for reelection.

Congress will resume its session on Jan. 22.

About six Senate initiatives are now awaiting President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature. These are Senate bills 1862 prescribing a fixed term for the office of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces; SB 1286 creating the rank of First Chief Master Sergeant and First Master Chief Petty Officer ranks in the enlisted ranks of the Armed Forces; SB 1967 amending RA 6948 to redefine the term "Veterans"; SB 2226 mandating the use of biofuels in the transport sector; SB 2231 amending the Automated Election System; and SB 2522 defining handline fishing and providing for regulations on the use of handline fishing boats.

Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, meanwhile, said voters should consider the positions of candidates in the failed impeachment of Ms Arroyo and in the unsuccessful effort to revise the 1987 Constitution.

"People should also look at their own stand on these issues," he told reporters.

Iñiguez, head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Episcopal Commission on Public Affairs, said a position defending Ms Arroyo against impeachment while favoring Charter change might go against people seeking elective posts in May.

Former Sen. Francisco Tatad yesterday threatened to pull out of the United Opposition's senatorial plans if it continues with its plan to draft candidates whose respective families already have incumbent members in the Senate.

Tatad said he was fully aware of the consequences of his sentiments and remarks as one of the UNO's top bets for the Senate in this year's elections include San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito, son of the UNO's avowed leader and kingmaker, deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"I don't see any justification for the exclusive club of the Senate to have two members coming from the same family at the same time," Tatad said at the weekly Kapihan sa Sulo news forum in Quezon City.

Aside from Ejercito who, if he wins, will join his half-brother Sen. Jinggoy Estrada in the Senate, UNO also appears to have already tapped lawyer Aquilino Pimentel III and House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano for its senatorial lineup.

Pimentel is the son of Senate minority leader, "Nene" Pimentel Jr., while Cayetano is the brother of incumbent senator, Pia Cayetano.

According to Tatad, having two members of one family in the Senate is a dangerous precedent that may destroy the institution.

"Whose interests will they represent? Their families' or the country's?" he said.

7.9 Japan quake raised tsunami alert from US to RP

TOKYO—SMALL TSUNAMI waves hit northern and eastern Japan on Saturday after a powerful north Pacific earthquake prompted tsunami warnings across northern and eastern Japan and Russia, as well as Alaska.

Tsunami watches were also issued for parts of the Pacific, a region that is nervous about tsunami two years after a deadly wave off Aceh in Indonesia killed more than 230,000 people.

The watches included the Philippines, Guam, Taiwan and Hawaii.

A 40-centimeter wave was reported at Chichijima in the Ogasawara islands, some 1,200 kilometers south of Tokyo, and several smaller waves on Hokkaido and northern Japan, but there were no reports of injuries and no immediate reports of damage.

An official in the Philippines said they had issued a tsunami alert "level one," which warned residents on the northern and eastern coastlines to wait for further information and possible evacuation.

Japan later downgraded the tsunami warning to a "watch." It had earlier issued evacuation advisories for tens of thousands of households in the country.

The United States Geological Survey put the quake's magnitude at 7.9, a "major" tremor, and said its epicenter was 525 km east northeast of Kuril'sk, Kurile islands, and 1,710 km northeast of Tokyo.

The same area was struck by a powerful quake in November, prompting evacuations and tsunami warnings, but in the end only small waves—the highest being 40 cm—reached Japan.

An official in Russia's Emergencies Ministry told Reuters that the threat of a tsunami had passed.

"Half-past eight, nine o'clock Moscow time (0530-0600 GMT—8 a.m. in Manila) was the approximate time the threat of a tsunami was due to appear. That time passed, and the threat did not materialize. Everything is normal," the official said.

Japan's Meteorological Agency had said that tsunami as high as a meter could hit parts of Hokkaido and that smaller waves were likely to hit a wide area of Pacific coastal areas from Hokkaido to Wakayama prefecture in western Japan on the country's largest main island of Honshu.

Hokkaido officials urged residents to move to higher ground, and fire trucks made the rounds of coastal areas warning about the possibility of a tsunami. There was only moderate shaking in Hokkaido and no immediate reports of injury due to the quake.

Television footage showed one worried resident of Kushiro studying the coastline with binoculars from an evacuation center.

"I'm scared to return home," one woman, cradling a child, told NHK. *Reuters*

Internet, phones down in Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—SOME AREAS OF MINDANAO experienced disruptions to Internet and telephone services yesterday morning but the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) said it had yet to ascertain the cause of the problem.

Claro Landeta, PLDT team leader for the Visayas and Mindanao, said Internet and telephone services in the cities of Ozamiz in Misamis Occidental and Valencia in Bukidnon bogged down starting at 10 a.m.

The cities of Davao and Cagayan, he said, also experienced intermittent connections because of the problem that might have been caused by a breach in a fiber optics network.

Landeta said a team had been dispatched to trace the problem.

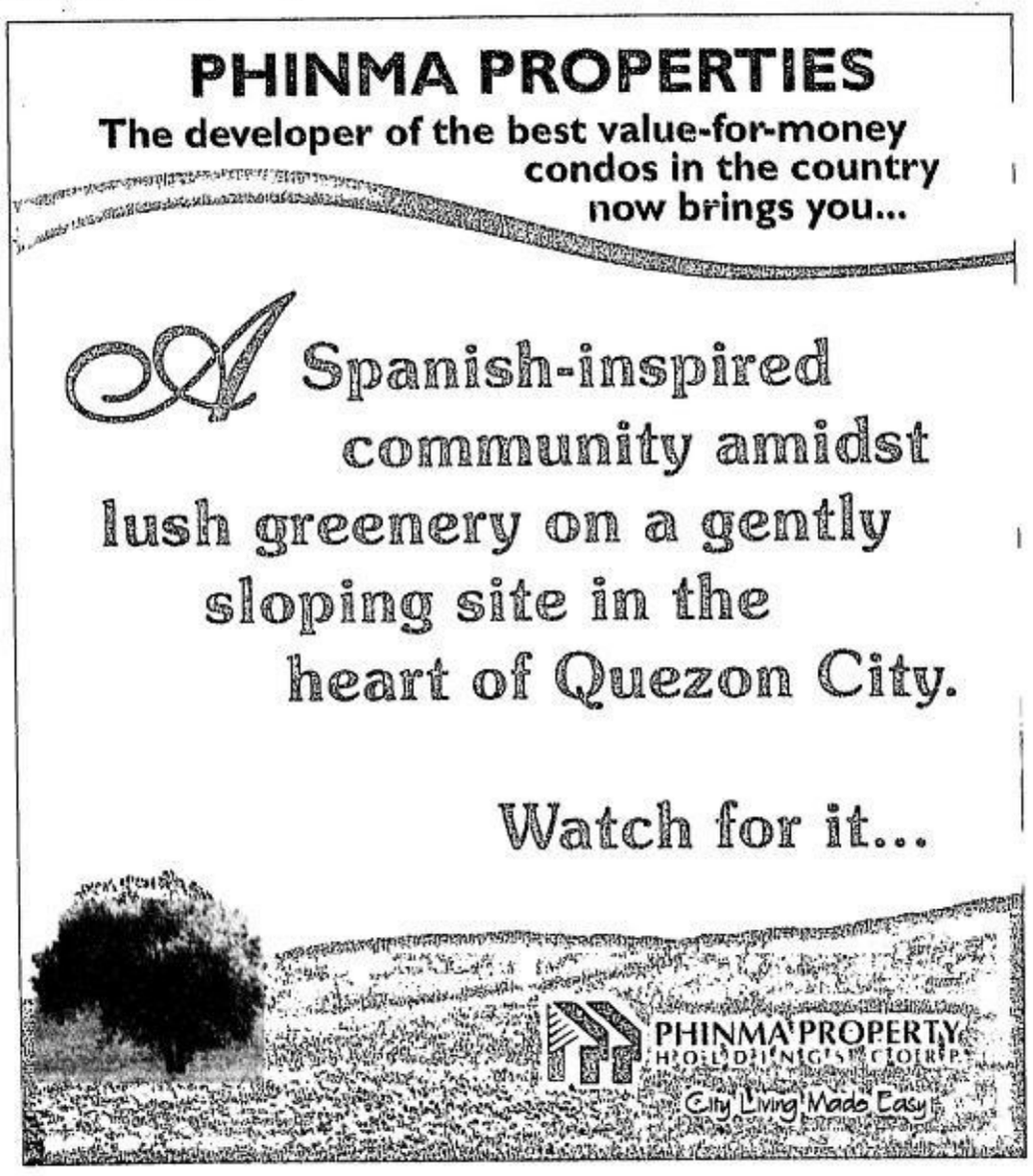
"Within 24 hours the team will try to repair the connection," he said.

Landeta said because of the problem, PLDT was now using loop connections to restore services to other areas.

But he said some areas would still experience connection problems "due to congestion."

The Internet connection in Mindanao, like in many parts of Asia, had not yet returned to normal after a powerful earthquake in December off Taiwan damaged the offshore submarine fiber optics cables that link Asian countries with the United States and beyond.

China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and other countries all experienced disruptions to their Internet services after the quake hit. *Dennis Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*



Unified import system for Asean gov'ts sought

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES-LED ASEAN Business Advisory Council (BAC) yesterday urged governments of the bloc to adopt a unified system of processing imports as well as to treat workers of other member countries as locals, to help realize a single economy by 2015.

Launched in April 2003, Asean BAC is the official linkage of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to provide private sector feedback and guidance to boost Asean's efforts toward economic integration and to identify priority areas for consideration by the region's leaders.

Asean leaders endorsed in 2005 the recommendation of economic ministers to advance the target date for an Asean Economic Community by five years from the original 2020.

Donald G. Dee, one of three Filipino members of Asean BAC, said in an interview the region needed an agreement on the comprehensive mutual recognition of professionals and workers if economic integration is to be hastened.

The other two Philippine representatives to the council are current Asean BAC chair Jose Concepcion Jr. and Miguel Varela—all three are leading members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Comprehensive MRA

"A comprehensive MRA (mutual recognition arrangement) would do away with separate MRAs for each (line of work) which take considerably more time," Dee explained.

So far, the 10 members have signed MRAs on engineers and nurses, which allow professionals of one member country to practice their trade in other member countries without needing to get licenses from each government.

Signed in December 2005 and December 2006, respectively, both MRAs are seen as a big help for the Philippines, which is one of the biggest exporter of skills and talents within Southeast Asia and the rest of the world as well.

"We also need to establish the Asean Single Window as soon as possible if as this would help the smooth flow of goods, especially those related to the industries identified as priority sectors for the Asean Economic Community.

11 sectors

These are 11 sectors that include agro-based products, air travel and air transport, automotive products, software, electronics, fisheries, healthcare, rubber-based products, textiles and apparels, tourism and wood-based products.

The ASW aims at ensuring the speedy clearance of imports through single submission of data, single data processing, and single decision-making for the release of goods.

Asean economic ministers have agreed to set up an inter-agency task force comprising representatives from relevant government agencies, such as, trade, health, agriculture, customs and those responsible for standards and conformance, to design the ASW. But Dee said this needs to be operational soon enough.

Further, Dee said Asean governments need to agree to recognize as local ventures those businesses that are partnerships of firms based in at least two Asean members.

Tax exemptions

The Asean BAC's proposal is that such firms should be spared from paying taxes in each country and also to be treated with equal rights as a strictly local firm.

Asked what reaction from the leaders was expected, Dee said they were likely to agree and tell the Asean BAC to formulate the terms of reference or guidelines on how to do the proposals.

The Asean BAC held a dialog with the leaders yesterday, mainly to report on what the council has achieved in the past year. The group also held the Asean Business Investment Summit last Dec. 7.

Mactan battle reenactment highlights sideshow

LAPU-LAPU CITY—RAIN OR SHINE, THE show must go on and performers for the first of the Spouses Program of the Asean Summit at the Mactan Shrine here gamely put on a show, amid blistering sun and pouring rain.

Only two of the leaders' spouses showed up for the restaging of Lapu-Lapu's victory over Magellan in Mactan—Madam Ani Bambang Yudhoyono, wife of Indonesian President Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Col. Khunying Chitravadee Chulanont, wife of Thai Prime Minister Gen. Surayud Chulanont.

But they were joined by the wives of various officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations who are also involved in the summit.

The presentation, the "Kadaugan sa Mactan," started with a re-enactment of the fight between the native warriors led by chieftain Lapu-Lapu and Ferdinand Magellan's soldiers, complete with cannon shots and explosions and burning of houses.

The Asean ladies were also treated to dances and songs such as the Pangaleya, a neo-ethnic dance ritual petitioning the *anitos* for help; Bulaklakan, a young maiden's dance in celebration of the flowers of May; a guitar solo and a song by Eastern Samar Vice Gov. Leander R. Geli; and a brief musical excerpt from the Cebuano zarzuela "*Inday Paabota Ko sa Langit*."

Local performer Warfe Engracia sang a Bahasa song, "*Aku Jatuh Cinta*" (I'm Falling In Love With You), to the delight of the Indonesian First Lady.

"It went very well despite the rain. The talents performed very well. That shows you have talent. They (the spouses) were very happy," said First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, who was playing host to the spouses of the Asean heads of state and government.

Meanwhile, another summit party host, faced with the unhappy news of having to accommodate 10 presidents and prime ministers, thousands of troops and scores of sniffer dogs into her seating plan, took it all in stride.

Clarice Veloso thought her big day was in tatters when Asean re-scheduled its annual summit to Jan.13 in the Shangri-La Hotel, also the venue for her wedding reception.

The bride-to-be had the plush resort on Mactan island booked a year in advance long before the original summit date was reset, and the hotel had to honor its commitment to the couple.

So the summit organizers decided to incorporate the wedding reception as an optional program that the Asean leaders might want to attend.

"Everyone has been very helpful and we decided to make the best of it," said the 30-year-old marketing manager, who is based in San Francisco.

"It's going to be different and exciting," she said.

It certainly is. The 160 wedding guests had to provide passport numbers with their RSVPs and will be bused from the church to the hotel along a deserted road save for roadblocks and police officers wearing wraparound shades.

Veloso said all 10 leaders were welcome to join the reception but she didn't fear getting swept off her feet, not even by the the presence of a King, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

"I've already found my prince," she said. *Irene R. Sino Cruz, Inquirer Visayas, and Reuters*

27 little people serenade spouses of bigwigs

By Connie E. Fernandez
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—ROMEL, A 15-YEAR-old former thief from Carbon market, was excited.

He began rarely playing his favorite game of basketball with his friends inside the Community Scouts where he lives. He also stopped indulging in his favorite cold drinks.

"I have to take care of myself because I am going to sing before big people," said Romel in Cebuano.

He was referring to the spouses of the leaders of East Asia who are in Cebu for their annual retreat.

Romel is one of the 27 members of the Children's Choir chosen to sing before the spouses during the dinner at the Malacañang sa Sugbo last night and this morning at the Friendship Park inside the Family Park in Barangay Talamban.

They are not ordinary children. Like Romel, some used to be petty thieves. Others had been victims of sexual abuse.

"These are children in need of special attention," said Annabeth Cuizon of the Parian Drop-in Center who supervises the choir rehearsals.

She explained that they came from different agencies that cater to the children's special needs—Kadasig Parents Association, St. Mary (Eurobecia) Training Center, Community Scouts and Youth Guidance Center and Nazareth's Children Center.

Temporary water interruption in Quezon City needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is currently upgrading its distribution lines and facilities to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. We regret that we will have to temporarily interrupt water supply in portions of Quezon City starting 10:00 p.m., Monday, January 15, 2007, up to 6:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 16, due to the upgrading work on the distribution mainlines.

The following areas will be affected: Barangays Obrero, Paligsahan, Laging Handa, Sacred Heart, Kamuning, Roxas and South Triangle.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

Manila Water **For the latest update, please call our Customer Call Center Hotline at 1627.**

We don't just lay pipes; we improve lives.

(PDI – Jan. 14, 2007)

Correction

IN THE STORY "Laundering witness faces deportation" which appeared on Page A16 of the Jan. 12 issue, the surname of the Spanish expatriate should have been spelled Goicoechea not Goicochea.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, January 14, 2007
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

The bridegroom rejoices in his bride.

For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace,
for Jerusalem I will not keep silent,
until her holiness shines like the dawn
and her salvation flames like a burning torch.
The nations will see your holiness
and all the kings your glory.
You will be called by a new name
which the mouth of Yahweh will reveal.
You will be a crown of glory
in the hand of Yahweh,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
No longer will you be named Forsaken;
no longer will your land be called
Abandoned;
but you will be called My Delight
and your land Espoused.
For Yahweh delights in you
and will make your land his spouse.
As a young man marries a virgin,
so will your builder marry you;
and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride,
so will your God rejoice in you.

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 12:4-11

One and the same spirit

There is diversity of gifts, but the Spirit is the same. There is diversity of ministries, but the Lord is the same. There is diversity of works, but the same God works in all.

The Spirit reveals his presence in each one with a gift that is also a service. One is to speak with wisdom, through the Spirit. Another teaches according to the same Spirit. To another is given faith, in which the Spirit acts; to another the gift of healing, and it is the same Spirit. Another works miracles, another is a prophet, another recognizes what comes from the good or evil spirit; another speaks in tongues, and still another interprets what has been said in tongues. And all of this is the work of the one and only Spirit, who gives to each one as he so desires.

Gospel: John 2:1-11

The beginning of Jesus' signs at Cana

Three days later there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus was also invited to the wedding with his disciples. When all the wine provided for the celebration had been served and they had run out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." Jesus replied, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come."

However his mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby were six stone water jars meant for the ritual washing as practiced by the Jews; each jar could hold 20 or 30 gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim. Then Jesus said, "Now draw some out and take it to the steward." So they did.

The steward tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing from where it had come; for only the servants who had drawn the water knew. So, he called the bridegroom to tell him, "Everyone serves the best wine first and when people have drunk enough, he serves that which is ordinary. Instead you have kept the best wine until the end."

This miraculous sign was the first, and Jesus performed it at Cana in Galilee. In this way he let his Glory appear and his disciples believed in him.

Commentary

The messiah is a bridegroom, and the people of God are God's 'delight.' God rejoices in us, bringing us vindication, glory and hope. We live at the wedding feast (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and have been overwhelmed with gifts: the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. It is a feast for the people so that all our needs are taken care of. This is the wedding feast—the Church, the Body of Christ, the people of God—and there is always more than enough for everyone, even after the celebration of the presence of God among us. It is only the servants in the backroom who know where the wine came from—the waters of baptism—now poured as the wine of the Eucharist and the feast.

The kingdom of God only comes through obedience: Do whatever he tells us; listen to him, obey! Can we be found among the disciples of Jesus? Are we unaware of the mysteries of our faith or are we the servants who obey?

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ADVT

Defensor sounds, looks silly ...

From page A1

nizance for Estrada, he said.

Villa-Ignacio said even lawyers in Malacañang were distancing themselves from Defensor's statements about the possibility of Estrada being released on recognizance from his Tanay resthouse detention.

Release on recognizance means a jailed person is freed without bail to the care of someone with high moral standing in the community.

Political ploy

Considering that Defensor is running for senator in May, his talk about Estrada being released on recognizance was just a political ploy, Villa-Ignacio said.

Defensor made similar remarks about the possibility of Estrada being released from detention in 2005, ostensibly to reconcile the rival camps of Estrada and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Villa-Ignacio suggested that the defense panel should just file a motion for a pass of several days' duration on the grounds that Estrada has to be with his ailing 102-year-old mother.

"Erap knows this. I personally told him that if he wants to be with his mother I will not object," the prosecutor said.

9 other agencies affected

But the proper manifestations have to be filed in court.

"Let them file the appropriate motion and argue their position," Villa-Ignacio said.

He said that while the prosecution might not object to a furlough for Estrada, other parties need to comment before the court can decide on the matter.

"I understand there are nine agencies that are affected whenever Erap leaves his detention," he said.

But he said a protracted pass for Estrada might also be taken to mean that the deposed president was already being released.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez meanwhile is adamant that Estrada must declare and accept the legitimacy of the Arroyo presidency and stop all destabilization moves if he wants to secure a temporary release.

"For me, the only basis for reconciliation is this: Mr. Estrada should make a declaration that he accepts the legitimacy of the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo."

Gonzalez said Estrada has to make that statement and also "stop all the destabilization moves that he has been doing."

Gonzalez doubted Defensor

Gonzalez doubted that Defensor has the President's backing on this issue.

"I don't believe in the supposed arrangement, although I would accept it if it is the President herself who is saying that," Gonzalez told DwIZ radio yesterday.

For starters, Gonzalez said Estrada should agree that all versions of the "Hello Garci" tapes—which allegedly showed the President trying to rig the 2004 elections—are fabricated.

He said Estrada must also agree to having the tapes examined and tested by foreign experts to show once and for all that they were all "doctored."

'Principal prisoner'

Estrada then goes back to being a private citizen, he said.

The justice secretary also bewailed the fact that although he was removed from power on charges of massive graft and corruption, Estrada continues to enjoy the life of a "privileged prisoner, lionized by media, making him swell-headed."

"He is a disgraced President. You know what happened to (US President Richard) Nixon. He did not steal a centavo, but he's considered a disgraced President," he said.

Key points of Asean antiterror convention

CEBU CITY—Following are key points from Asean's first convention on fighting terrorism signed yesterday.

The agreement says that:

- "Terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic group."
- That Asean countries are "deeply concerned over the grave danger posed by terrorism to innocent lives, infrastructure and the environment, regional and international peace and stability as well as to economic development."
- That they will cooperate to "counter, prevent and suppress terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," but in line with "non-interference in the internal affairs" of member nations.

The agreement says that would include cooperation on exchanging intelligence, enhancing inter-faith dialogue, and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice as nations aim to prevent:

- "The commission of terrorist acts, including by the provision of early warning."
- "Those who finance, plan, facilitate or commit terrorist acts from using their respective territories for those purposes."
- "The financing of terrorist acts."
- "The movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border control and controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents."

The nations also agree to:

- Fairly treat anyone taken into custody due to the agreement.
- Promote the rehabilitation and social reintegration of those who commit terrorist acts.
- Assist each other with criminal investigations.
- Extradite offenders or submit their case for prosecution in their own courts "without undue delay." *AFP*

Speaking 2 languages helps delay dementia

From page A1

day for most of their lives can delay the onset of dementia by up to four years compared with those who only know one language, Canadian scientists said on Friday.

Dementia is a medical condition that causes gradual worsening of the memory and other mental abilities, especially among old people, leading to confused behavior.

Researchers said the extra effort involved in using more than one language appeared to boost blood supply to the brain and ensure nerve connections remained healthy—two factors thought to help fight off dementia.

"We are pretty dazzled by the results," Professor Ellen Bialystok of Toronto's York University said in a statement.

Constant exercise

"In the process of using ... two languages, you are engaging parts of your brain, parts of your mind that are active and need that kind of constant exercise and activity, and with that experience [it] stays more robust," she later told CTV television.

The leading cause of dementia among the elderly is Alzheimer's disease, which gradually destroys a person's memory. There is no known cure.

Bialystok's team focused on 184 elderly patients with signs of dementia who attended a Toronto memory clinic between 2002 and 2005. Of the group, 91 spoke only one language while 93 were bilingual.

"The researchers determined that the mean age of onset of dementia symptoms in the monolingual group was 71.4 years, while the bilingual group was 75.5 years," the statement said.

"This difference remained even after considering the possible effect of cultural differences, immigration, formal education, employment and even gender as [influences] in the results," it added.

Bialystok stressed that bilingualism helped delay the start of dementia rather than preventing it altogether.

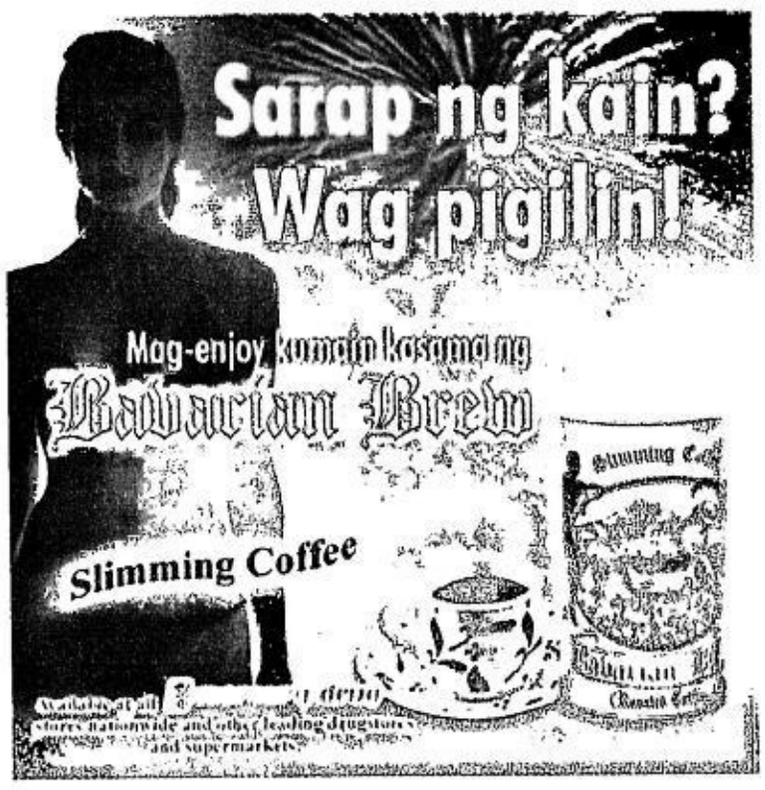
Protective effect

Psychologist Fergus Craik, another member of the team, said the data showed that being fully bilingual had "a huge protective effect" against the onset of dementia but he added that the study was still a preliminary finding. The team plans more research into the beneficial side-effects of bilingualism.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada described the report as exciting and said it confirmed recent studies that showed that keeping the brain active was a good way to delay the impact of dementia.

"Anything that staves off the time when the risk factor (for dementia) overcomes the defenses is wonderful news," scientific director Jack Diamond said.

The society estimates that in 2000—the latest year for which data is available—Canada spent C$5.5 billion (P230 billion) taking care of people with Alzheimer's disease. *Reuters*



Leviste had 'love-hate' relationship with victim

From page A1

would pursue the case and would talk to their lawyers after her father's funeral in Lobo, Batangas, on Jan. 19.

She also said the family wanted to be guided on what to do next, because of certain unexplained situations that supposedly took place after the Jan. 12 shooting.

The ex-governor and estranged husband of former Sen. Loren Legarda will remain confined at the Makati Medical Center as advised by his doctor, but police will file homicide charges against him at the Makati prosecutor's office tomorrow.

Leviste's physician, Dr. Raynato Kasilag, said in a medical bulletin issued yesterday morning that Leviste had to stay at the hospital for a few more days for adjustment of medication to treat his high blood pressure.

Second father

City police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said, however, that despite Leviste's condition, the filing of charges would proceed.

But he told the INQUIRER that investigators were still waiting for witnesses to give their statements, and for the final report of scene-of-the-crime operatives.

Sanchez told the INQUIRER that Leviste and her father were "like any married couple who had been together for 42 years—they had their misunderstandings and then made up."

She said that her father had been fiercely loyal to Leviste and started working for him at the age of 26, when the latter sought the vice governorship of Batangas.

"I have known the governor all my life and he was like a second father to me. But justice has to be served," she said.

Cell phones confiscated

Sanchez said that one of her father's cell phones that was recovered by her brother at Leviste's office disappeared after he put it down when someone came in to search the place.

"No one was talking; not one of the employees in the building called up any of us to inform us about [what had happened]," she said.

According to Sanchez, she learned about the shooting in a phone call from one of Leviste's employees who was then in Batangas.

"She only found out about it from a tenant [of Leviste-owned LPL Towers] and decided to call me up," Sanchez said, adding:

"Nobody was talking and I was told that all the employees were herded into a holding room for at least an hour, and all their cell phones were confiscated during the time that they were there."

Sanchez also said police should look into the possibility that there was another person in the room aside from her father and Leviste.

"I believe it was not homicide, and the governor does not go around without a bodyguard," she said without elaborating.

24-hour guard

Leviste has been under 24-hour police watch since he surrendered to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and local police at the hospital at about 3:30 p.m. the other day.

He said he had killed De las Alas and claimed self-defense. He was subsequently admitted for treatment of high blood pressure.

The body of De las Alas was found with multiple gunshot wounds between noon and 1 p.m. Friday in Leviste's office on the ninth floor of LPL Towers on Legaspi Street in Makati City.

Two policemen were guarding Leviste's 7th-floor hospital room at the time of the INQUIRER visit yesterday morning. Cruz said four to six more policemen were patrolling the hospital for additional security.

Cruz, who visited Leviste yesterday morning, said the latter's condition had improved but that his reflexes were still weak.

A request by the INQUIRER for an interview with the ex-governor was not granted, with a family member—a sister, according to one of the guards—saying he was "still heavily sedated."

Motive

Case investigators PO2 Ador Robles and PO2 Hernan Panabang said they were still waiting for two to three witnesses, who had promised to cooperate in the investigation, to show up at the Makati police headquarters.

Panabang said the motive for the killing had not yet been ascertained.

But a police official privy to the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to speak about the case, said it was usual for Leviste and De las Alas to have arguments, mostly over financial matters.

Seeks NBI inquiry

Dante Jimenez, founding chair of Volunteers against Crime and Corruption, said the De las Alas family will ask the National Bureau of Investigation to take over the inquiry.

"The family fears that the case is being railroaded," said Jimenez, who attended the wake for De las Alas at the Arlington Funeral Homes in Quezon City yesterday.

According to Jimenez, the family was wary of the police investigation because Mayor Binay himself had announced that the case was closed.

Binay said at a press briefing hours after Leviste's surrender that "the case is closed in the sense that the one behind the killing had already surrendered to the police."

Medical history

Per Kasilag's medical bulletin, Leviste has hypertensive cardiovascular disease, dyslipidemia (or abnormal levels of fat and cholesterol in the blood), and a history of transient ischemic attacks.

On his admission to the hospital on Friday afternoon, he was afflicted with hypertensive urgency—a condition that, if left untreated, could have led to a cerebrovascular accident or stroke.

Leviste is currently taking additional antihypertensive medications and sedatives.

"It is also imperative that he avoid stressful conditions for the moment, so as not to aggravate his hypertension," the doctor said.

Leviste has been Kasilag's patient since May 1999. *With a report from Nancy C. Carvajal*

MJ accused Perez of plunder in his complaint filed with Ombudsman in '02

From page A1

fense that carries the maximum penalty of death.

The former Manila congressman had also said in the 20-page complaint that he had started to doubt that he would get justice under President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

He said that a few days after he had delivered a privilege speech in the House naming Perez as the "million-dollar" extortionist being talked about in the media, the President personally "admonished" him to "submit your evidence before you are extradited."

"From then on, I knew I would not get justice in this case. The major papers quoted me as saying, 'I'm dead meat!'" he said in the complaint that appeared to have been received by the Ombudsman on Dec. 23, 2002, and sworn to before Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos.

Jimenez was extradited to the United States not long after, to face charges of mail fraud and making illegal campaign contributions to the Democratic Party.

Kissing scene

Jimenez also adverted to instances wherein Perez showed that he still enjoyed Ms Arroyo's confidence despite the claims of extortion aired not only by Jimenez but also by then Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama.

"In what could be a setup engineered by the PR operatives of Secretary Perez, President Arroyo was covered live on TV in a Malacañang function planting a kiss on [his] cheek ... while firmly clasping his right hand as if to tell the public that Secretary Perez is my man and nobody can touch him," Jimenez said.

He had attached a picture of the kissing scene as one of the annexes in his complaint-affidavit.

But in interviews with the media last week, after the Ombudsman found probable cause to file extortion and graft charges against Perez, Jimenez appeared to have made a turnaround.

He expressed doubt that Ms Arroyo was aware of the $2 million that Perez supposedly extorted from him in 2001.

$100 million

"Faced with a recalcitrant secretary of justice, the only government institution that I can turn to for assistance is the Office of the Ombudsman," Jimenez had said in his 2002 complaint.

He asked that Perez be charged with plunder, as defined under Sections 1, 2 and 6 in relation to Section 2 of the Plunder Law.

"[This is] for having acquired, amassed or accumulated illegal wealth in the aggregate amount of at least P100 million," he said.

(For a public officer to be charged with plunder, he/she must be found to have illegally acquired wealth of at least P50 million. The P100 million that Jimenez referred to was the rough equivalent of $2 million in pesos at the time.)

Only after saying that Perez should be charged with plunder, along with Perez's brother-in-law Ramon Arceo and business associate Ernest Escaler as "co-conspirators or co-principals," did Jimenez ask that the subjects of his complaint also be charged with extortion and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Jimenez likewise asked that Perez be charged with obstruction of justice, "for having prevented or suppressed the disclosure of his travel records which can be used as evidence in the investigation or prosecution of the extortion charge against him."

He further asked the Ombudsman to also charge Perez with violation of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Government Officials and Employees, for the then justice secretary's purported acceptance of the $2 million.

Back to law books

In media reports, Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni was quoted as saying at a press conference last Monday that only extortion and graft charges were recommended against Perez because the evidence pointed to only one incident of illegal acquisition of wealth.

"They should go back to their law books," retorted former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, who, based on the same supposed $2-million payoff, filed a complaint for plunder and money laundering against Perez before the Ombudsman.

"Even if it's just a one-time deal, if it satisfies all the requirements [of plunder], the case should be plunder," Chavez told the INQUIRER on Tuesday.

He added that he would file a motion asking the Ombudsman to resolve his own case of plunder and money laundering against Perez.

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We sincerely welcome
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on his visit for the ASEAN summit in the Philippines

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Troops keeping eye on rest of the country

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SECURITY FORCES ARE KEEPING AN EYE on other parts of the country to preempt further bomb attacks while the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Leaders' Summit is taking place in Cebu province.

A military spokesperson said troops have taken "proactive measures" in areas that are likely targets of terrorist attacks similar to those that hit the cities of General Santos, Cotabato and Kidapawan on Jan. 10 that left eight people dead and scores wounded.

"Our operational commanders are aware of probable scenarios, probable terror acts that may be staged by threat groups. They are aware so they are focused in several areas. Our territorial forces are taking proactive measures," Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said.

Last Jan. 5, a bomb also exploded in front of a popular shopping fastfood chain in Cotabato City.

Police recently filed frustrated murder charges against 11 persons including Basit Usman, a former commander of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, for the Jan. 5 bombing.

Mastermind of Jan. 10 attacks

Usman was again tagged as a possible mastermind of the Jan. 10 blasts.

The Australian Embassy recently issued a travel advisory urging its citizens to stay clear of the cities of Davao, General Santos, Cotabato, Kidapawan and Pagadian and the municipalities of Carmen, Isulan and Maganoy all in Mindanao, where it believed terrorist bombings are likely to occur.

"Our ground commanders would at this time have ideas on the probable targets (of attacks), taking into account historical data as well as present data," Bacarro said.

He said no additional troops were deployed in the sites of the recent blasts.

The military was placed on the highest red alert nationwide starting Jan. 10 for the Asean Summit.

"Usually the enemy will strike you in an area where you least expect them to hit you, that's why we raised our alert level nationwide," Bacarro said.

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Asean agrees to form joint rescue unit

CEBU CITY—TWO DAYS AFTER A SERIES of bombings rocked Mindanao, four Southeast Asian leaders have agreed to form a joint rescue unit that would respond to calamities, including disruptions of the peace, within their countries.

The leaders of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, grouped into the BIMP-East Asia Growth Area (BIMP-Eaga) sub-region, also agreed to expand subregional air linkages in a bid to bring in the investors and tourists that would spur economic growth.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesia President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Malaysia Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi agreed to adopt these proposals after they met for the 3rd BIMP-Eaga summit yesterday on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian nations' annual summit here.

According to Secretary Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, the leaders the joint rescue unit idea came about because of the subregion's susceptibility to "both natural and human calamities."

"A joint rescue effort must be worked out by the BIMP-Eaga ministers and officials, so if there are calamities, man-made or natural, in the BIMP-Eaga area, there would be immediate reaction and assistance from the four countries," said Dureza.

He said the term "manmade calamity" included "disruption in the peace and order," although he did not refer to the series of bomb blasts on Wednesday that killed seven people and wounded dozens in the cities of General Santos, Cotabato and Kidapawan in Mindanao.

Dureza said the consensus was that there was no need for a common resource center but that each country would arm itself with the necessary resources and capacities so that when calamity strikes, they can "immediately respond and converge."

He said the details were still being worked out by the ministers and senior officials of the four countries.

The countries' foreign and transportation secretaries and ministers signed a memorandum of understanding on expansion of air linkages under which seven major international airports would be granted fifth-freedom rights.

In commercial aviation, this means a country's airline is allowed the right to carry passengers from its own country to a second country, and from that country to a third country.

These airports are Bandar Seri Begawan in Brunei Darussalam, Pontianak and Balikpapan in Indonesia, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching in Malaysia and Davao and Zamboanga in the Philippines.

The agreement provides for the multiple designation of airlines without restrictions on frequency and capacity, and with stopover rights and code-sharing arrangements.

Dureza likened the agreement to an open-sky policy where there would be no limit in the frequency and the number of flights within the BIMP-Eaga region.

Once the air linkages are opened, he said it will be easier for overseas Filipino workers in Mindanao to fly out to the Middle East through the Bimp-Eaga gateway.

"It will have a ripple effect on all sectors. Investors will come, tourist will come, and of course, lives of people will improve. But it will take a little time," said Dureza. *Connie E. Fernandez, Inquirer Visayas*

5 documents signed by 10 Asean leaders

FIVE DOCUMENTS WERE SIGNED BY the 10 Asean leaders in one sitting at the Shangri-La Mactan yesterday.

Based on a program obtained by the INQUIRER, these were:

The Asean Convention on Counter-Terrorism; Cebu Declaration Towards One Caring and Sharing Community; Cebu Declaration on the Blueprint for the Asean Charter; Cebu Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers; Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an Asean Community;

Two documents were signed by foreign ministers of France and East Timor, namely their "Instruments of Extension" and "Instruments of Accession" to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

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Date	Subject	MCLE Credit Units	Lecturers
29 January Monday	The Significance of the Lawyer's Oath (*Legal Ethics*)	Three (3) units (9:00-12:15)	Justice Jose L. Sabio, Jr.
	Contemporary Approaches to Legal Research & Writing (*Legal Writing*)	Four (4) units (1:15-5:30)	Prof. Myrna S. Feliciano
30 January Tuesday	Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 and its IRR (*Substantive/Procedural Law*)	Three (3) units (9:00-12:15)	ACA Nimfa Cuesta-Vilches
	Intellectual Property Laws: Recent Developments and Procedure (*Substantive/Procedural Law*)	Three (3) units (1:15-4:30)	Atty. Emma Francisco
31 January Wednesday	ADR Skills for Lawyers (*Alternative Dispute Resolution*)	Three (3) units (9:00-12:00)	Prof. Rowena E.V. Daroy Morales
	Law on Technology: Introduction to Cyber Crimes (MCLE Prescribed)	Three (3) units (1:00-4:00)	Atty. Ivan John E. Uy
	Law on Government Bidding and Procurement (*Sub/Proc Law*)	Three (3) units (4:15-7:15)	Prof. Bartolome Fernandez
01 February Thursday	Jurisdiction of Courts in Criminal Cases (*MCLE Committee Prescribed*)	Three (3) units (9:00-12:15)	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval
	Pre-Trial in Cases of Psychological Incapacity and Other Defective Marriages (*Pre-Trial & Trial Skills*)	Four (4) units (1:15-5:30)	Prof. Rudyard A. Avila III
02 February Friday	Ethical Dimensions in the Availment of Legal Remedies and Court Processes (*Legal Ethics*)	Three (3) units (9:00-12:15)	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino
	Modes of Review of Arbitral Awards (*Alternative Dispute Resolution*)	Two (2) units (1:15-3:30)	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
	International Environmental Law (*International Law*)	Two (2) units (3:45-5:45)	Prof. Marvic MVF. Leonen

- REGISTRATION FEE: P7,000.00/package or P750.00/session [morning session or afternoon session]
- Fee is inclusive of snacks, LUNCH, MCLE Certificates of Attendance and lecture materials.
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No price tag for Cebu gains in summit

From page A1

tral Visayas from January to September reached 1.2 million or about 11 percent higher than the number for the same period in 2005.

The number of foreign visitors who make up at least a third of the total arrivals increased 18.5 percent, he said.

Yesterday, Monera said: "We will make sure we can take advantage of the greater (publicity) mileage from the summit so that it would translate to a sustained inflow of capital and revenues."

He added that the chamber was cranking up international promotion of the province through a five-month campaign called Cebu Business Month, which would kick off in February and culminate in June.

"The Cebu Business Month is evolving to become the business sector's own Sinulog or festival. It is an effective means of promoting Cebu in the field of information and communication technology, tourism, and small and medium enterprises that are export-oriented."

Export earnings

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, Cebu's export earnings have continually risen yearly from $2.4 billion in 1999 to $4.7 billion in 2005.

Top merchandise exports include electronics, garments, electrical equipment, vehicles and machinery parts, processed foods, steel and metal products; gift, toys and housewares and fashion accessories.

Roadshow

Major export destinations include the United States, Japan, Hong Kong, Belgium, Indonesia, China, The Netherlands, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand.

"We have talked with Ambassador Marciano Paynor Jr. (secretary general of the summit's national organizing committee) and Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia on how to capitalize on summit publicity and they have been supportive," Monera said.

The chamber president said they planned to embark on a road show covering major Asean cities to pump up ICT, tourism and export activities in Cebu.

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MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) COMPLIANCE PROGRAM
ONE-WEEK COURSE
26 February – 02 March 2007

DATE	TOPIC/SUBJECT	CREDIT HRS/TIME	LECTURER
26 Feb	The Revised Rules of the Court of Tax Appeals (MCLE Prescribed Subject)	(3hrs)9:00-12:15 pm	Justice Ernesto D. Acosta
	Updates Criminal Law and Procedure (Substantive/Procedural Law)	(3 hrs) 1:00-4:15	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta
27 Feb	Rules on Corporate Insolvency and Rehabilitation (MCLE Prescribed)	(3 hrs) 9:00-12:15 pm	Prof. Danilo L. Concepcion
	The VFA and Its Implications (International Law)	(2 hrs) 1:00-3:00 pm	Dean Merlin M. Magallona
	Ethical Considerations in Enforcing Fee Agreements (Legal Ethics)	(3 hrs) 3:15-6:15 pm	Dean Pacifico A. Agabin
28 Feb	Environmental Law (Substantive/Procedural Law)	(3 hrs) 9:00-12:15 pm	Prof. Marvic MVF. Leonen
	Trial Skills and Techniques (Pre-Trial and Trial Skills)	(4 hrs) 1:00-5:15 pm	Prof. Marvic MVF. Leonen
01 Mar	Civil Procedure Revisited (Substantive/Procedural Law)	(3 hrs) 9:00-12:15 pm	Justice Jose L. Sabio, Jr.
	Ethical Dimensions in the Availment of Legal Remedies and Court Processes (Legal Ethics)	(3 hrs) 1:00-4:15 pm	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino
02 Mar	Presentation of Witnesses and the Art of Direct and Cross Examination (Oral Advocacy)	(4 hrs) 8:00-12:15 pm	Prof. Theodore O. Te
	Court-Annexed and Court –Referred Mediation (ADR)	(3 hrs) 1:00-4:00 pm	Prof. Rowena EV Daroy Morales
	ADR Skills for Lawyers (ADR)	(2 hrs) 4:15-6:15 pm	Prof. Rowena EV Daroy Morales

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MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) COMPLIANCE PROGRAM
SATURDAY COURSE
03, 10, 17, 24 February and 03 March 2007

DATE	SUBJECT	CREDIT HOURS/TIME	LECTURERS
3 Feb	Court-Annexed and Court-Referred Mediation (ADR)	Three (3) (9:00- 12:15)	Commissioner Linda M. Hornilla
	The Rules on Pre-Trial (Pre-Trial and Trial Skills)	Four (4) (1:00– 5:15)	Prof. Ma. Victoria A. Avena
10 Feb	Corruption and Discipline and Abuse of Public Trust (Legal Ethics)	Three (3) (9:00-12:15)	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta
	Recent Supreme Court Circulars Affecting Lawyers and Addressing Grievances Against Court Personnel (MCLE Prescribed)	Three (3) (1:00 – 4:15)	ACA Nimfa Cuesta-Vilches
17 Feb	Tax Considerations of Doing Business in the Philippines (Substantive Law)	Three (3) (9:00-12:15)	Prof. Ma.Gracia Pulido-Tan
	Effective Legal Writing (Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy)	Four (4) (1:00 - 5:15)	Prof. Rudyard A. Avila III
24 Feb	Analytical Survey of Selected SC Decisions in Persons and Family Law (Substantive Law)	Three (3) (9:00 -12:15)	Prof. Rowena EV Daroy Morales
	Internal Rules of the Court of Appeals (Substantive Law)	Three (3) (1:00-4:00)	Justice Jose L. Sabio, Jr.
	ADR and the Lawyer (ADR)	Two (2) (4:15 - 6:15)	Prof. Rowena EV Daroy Morales
03 Mar	Dynamics of the 2007 Electoral Process (MCLE Prescribed)	Three (3) (9:00-12:15)	Justice Regalado E. Maambong
	VFA and Its Implications (International Law)	Two (2) (1:00 - 3:00)	Dean Merlin M. Magallona
	Courtroom Decorum (Legal Ethics)	Three (3) (3:15-6:15)	Judge Rosalina Pison

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CA justice regrets misquoting Justice Oliver Holmes

By Norman Bordadora

IT WAS A FOOTNOTE ERROR AND WAS not meant in any way to mislead.

Thus Court of Appeals Associate Justice Apolinario Bruselas explained the alleged misquotation found in his decision finding moot the custody issue of convicted rapist US Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

Bruselas cited in his decision a quote from the eminent US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes but which former Senate President Jovito Salonga found to be inaccurate.

Last week, Salonga raised the issue that the CA's justification of finding Smith's custody moot after being transferred to the US Embassy following an agreement between the Philippine and US sides was based on a "doctored, falsified" quote from Holmes.

He said Holmes' quote cited in the CA decision that read "the other branches of the government are ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts" should have read "legislatures are the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people."

Salonga said the quote was used to justify the executive branch's actions that led to Smith's transfer on Dec. 29 to the US Embassy from the Makati City Jail despite the pending custody appeal filed by Smith himself before the CA which was then still unacted on.

But on Friday, Bruselas' division clerk of court informed Salonga that the paraphrased Holmes quote cited by the CA should have been attributed to US Supreme Court Justice J. Harlan in a 1942 dissenting opinion and not to Holmes himself in a 1904 decision.

"We wish to express that the Office appreciates the good senator's vigilance and continued concern for the country and the Filipino people," said lawyer Tammy Ann Reyes-Mendillo, clerk of court of the CA's special 16th Division chaired by Bruselas.

"At any rate, we assure you that the omission was made in plain good faith," she added.

"I'm willing to understand Justice Bruselas' explanation but the quotation is a mere paraphrase and does not meet the issue against Smith who was convicted for raping 'Nicole,'" Salonga told the INQUIRER.

"What will the court now do with respect to the wrongs (that were) committed against not only Nicole but also against the judiciary and against our aggrieved people?" he added.

Salonga said that while he didn't believe Bruselas may have deliberately misquoted the US magistrate Holmes, he may be held liable for falsification punishable under the Revised Penal Code with aresto mayor or up to six months in prison.

"What about the complicity between the executive department and the US government represented by US Ambassador Kristie Kenney?" Salonga asked.

DOH maintains alert against avian flu

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH has maintained its preparedness and strict monitoring of influenza cases in the country following the latest World Health Organization's warning of the resurgence of the dreaded bird flu virus in Asia.

Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the department's National Epidemiology Center, yesterday said airports and seaports throughout the country remained on alert for any possible bird flu from abroad.

"We're still on alert and monitoring the status" even if the country remained bird flu-free, Tayag said in a phone interview.

"Our preparations and measures are in place nationwide and they had not been relaxed; we don't want to be caught off guard," he added.

The health official said that the center recently concluded its first simulation exercises with the Bureau of Quarantine where personnel and staff of the airports and seaports were trained how to respond to possible bird flu cases, and how to use equipment such as thermo scanners in detecting people possibly sick with bird flu.

Aside from the simulation exercise, Tayag said the center continued to keep in touch "on a regular basis" with the Department of Agriculture for the monitoring of migratory birds as well as the poultry industry.

Local governments are also involved in the information dissemination. *Jerome Aning*

Koran translation meant for Maranao only, says scholar

By Nash B. Maulana
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—THE MARANAO SCHOLAR who translated the Koran into the Maranao dialect defended his work yesterday, saying it was "solely intended for Maranao (readers)."

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Saromantang, speaking by phone through an interpreter from the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Makati City, conceded that his work could be vulnerable to misinterpretation when read by a Maguindanaon or Iranun—neighboring Muslim tribes in Central Mindanao.

Another Filipino Muslim scholar Uztadz Muhammad Sulaiman triggered this language row when he said last week that the translated Koran being distributed by Saudi Arabians described Allah with the word "Sapi," which he understood to mean "cow."

Saromantang, however, disowned the copy cited by Sulaiman in the INQUIRER report on Thursday, noting that the cover page of that disputed translation said: "The Koran and our interpretation of it in the Iranon dialect in the Philippines."

His original work never made any reference to the Iranon dialect, he stressed.

Differences in dialect

The Maranao dialect, spoken mainly by the Muslims of the Lanao provinces in Central Mindanao, greatly differs from the Maguindanaon dialect which is spoken by people of Maguindanao province.

Iranon (sometimes spelled as "Iranun") is widely spoken by a community of ethnic Iranun people living in upland Shariff Kabunsuan province, which is between Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur. Iranons combine many Maranao and Maguindanaon terms, he explained.

"My translation is solely intended for the Maranao audience and it may not be understood by a non-Maranao," he repeated.

But Badjury Mustapha, a Maranao, told the INQUIRER that he too sought the attention of local *ulama* (scholars) regarding his copy of the translation, particularly, of Verses 68-69 of the Koran's Chapter II, titled Al-Baqara (The heifer).

English translation

Mustapha said his copy, which was given to him by Arab-looking men during his pilgrimage to Mecca, has Verse 68 translated to mean: "In truth, God said he is a cow that is not old enough; not too young, but one that is appropriate in age." Verse 69 repeats part of the above translation and prescribes the cow's color as "*binaning*" (yellow).

In an English translation of the Koran (1935 edition), eminent Muslim scholar Abdullah Yusuf Ali quotes Moses in Verse 68, Chapter II as saying: "The heifer should be neither too old/ Nor too young/ But of middling age. Now, do what ye are commanded." The sacrifice is said to be meant to ritualize the children of Israel's submission to the true God after they worshipped an image of a calf fashioned out of yellow metal at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Earlier, the president of the Philippine Islamic Council, Taha Basman, came to Saromantang's defense.

Basman said Sulaiman—who is not Maranao—was "probably lost in his own translation," of the Maranao version of the Koran.

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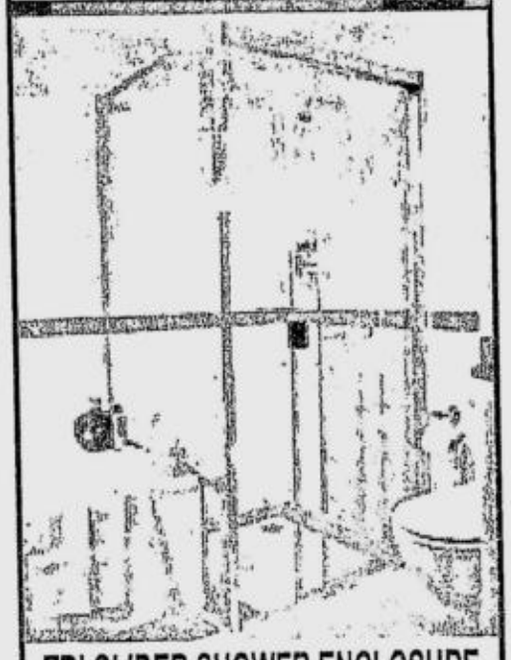
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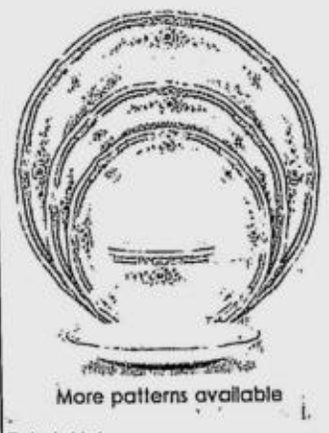
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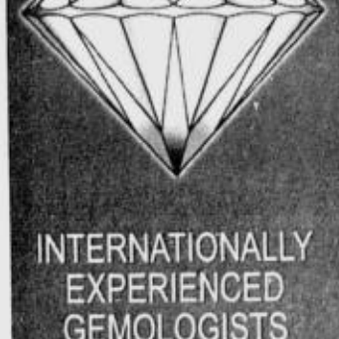
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AIDS: Asean

By Volt Contreras

CEBU—SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS are being challenged to spend more on AIDS-related programs for sex workers and their clients, sexually active gays and drug addicts—people who may not easily draw compassion in a "judgmental" society.

At yesterday's opening of the 12th Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, leaders of the 10-nation bloc formally received a UN report saying the region has become home to an estimated 1.5 million people with HIV/AIDS.

The "most severe epidemics" of the disease in the whole of Asia are in the Asean countries, said UN Undersecretary General Peter Piot, author of the report which was tabled at the traditional retreat of the leaders held at Shangri-l

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HANDS-ON: Cebu City Mayor Tommy Osmeña escorts militant groups trying to get as close as possible to the Cebu International Convention Center. But riot policemen blocked the protesters before they could reach the boundary of Cebu City and Mandaue City where the CICC is located. REM ZAMORA

Mayor stops Cebu rally by himself

CEBU CITY—HUNDREDS OF DEMONstrators intent on marching right into the grounds of the convention center where leaders of Southeast Asian nations launched their annual meeting yesterday were stopped from doing so by the timely intervention of Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

Osmeña, known for being brutally frank and for refusing to back down from unpopular decisions, prevented a violent confrontation between the police and the protesters who were marching towards the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) in defiance of a police ban on rallies.

The protesters started gathering early yesterday at the Fuente Osmeña Park in the city center. They carried effigies of President Macapagal-Arroyo and of a Western figure labelled "No. 1 Terrorist."

Later they began marching in the direction of the CICC in Mandaue where some of the summit events were being held. "US No. 1 terrorist," chanted the demonstrators.

Osmeña marched with the demonstrators for more than three kilometers, until they were stopped by a platoon of riot police in Mabolo, about 200 meters from the ceremonial route on Juan Luna Ave., at about noon.

As tension rose, Osmeña stepped in, negotiating with the leaders of the march for almost an hour amid heavy rain. He and the protesters were all soaking wet.

'Freedom Park'

The mayor told Renato Reyes and Paul Rodriguez, the secretary general and Cebu head respectively of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, that he had already offered practically the whole of Cebu City as their "freedom park."

He said this meant that activists were allowed to stage protest activities in practically all parts of the city, except in the ceremonial route, the streets taken by summit delegates as they travel between their hotels and summit venues—the CICC in Mandaue and the Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort and Spa on Mactan island.

The marchers eventually agreed to finish their program where they were stopped. They burned the effigies of Ms Arroyo, US President George Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and quietly dispersed at about 2 p.m.

Supt. Mariano Natuel, the ground commander for Crowd Dispersal Management, said the police and the military were grateful to Osmeña whose presence was the No. 1 reason why a commotion was prevented.

"The protesters have strong respect for the mayor, as the mayor has for the protesters," Natuel said.

Osmeña has built some goodwill with the militant groups in Cebu, especially after he allowed activists who came from other regions to join the summit protest activities to stay at an elementary school in Barangay Zapatera.

By contrast, Mandaue Mayor Thaddeo Ouano has declared a no-permit no-rally policy in his city, giving the police the go-signal to use whatever means necessary to stop any demonstrations.

Four activists, affiliated with Bayan Muna, were jailed on Friday. One of them claimed to have been mauled by a policeman when he tried to go near the CICC with other protesters. *Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas*

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and injecting drug

AIDS epidemics erupting in most Asean countries are largely concentrated in these groups, it noted.

The long-term challenge for Asean is for Asean to ensure that lifesaving medicines, such as new antiretroviral drugs and "a future vaccine against AIDS," will be easily affordable to patients especially in low-income member countries, the document said.

Twenty-five years after the first cases of AIDS were detected in homosexual men in the United States, progress in containing the disease has been most successful in countries that have promoted "a supportive and non-judgmental environment" for the affected individual.

Slowdown in some states

In contrast, "mandatory approaches," such as requiring people to undergo tests, have only "worsen(ed) fears and have not worked in practice," the report added.

The paper noted that the epidemic had slowed down in some Asean states because of efforts of government and civil society, "but the overall signs are worrying."

More "newly infected" people were recorded worldwide in 2006 than in any previous year, he said, citing UNAIDS data released two months ago.

In an INQUIRER interview in Cebu, UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director Deborah Landey explained that while the worldwide spread of AIDS "continues to outstrip our efforts, we are starting to see progress for the first time in certain countries."

In East and West Africa, the Caribbean, and in Asean's Thailand and Cambodia, infection rates have also started to decline, thanks to their respective prevention efforts, she said at the sidelines of the summit.

Also on an encouraging note, Landey said a UN target set in 2001 for AIDS-related resource expenditures worldwide to reach $7-8 billion by 2005 has been met. Of that sum, 35 percent came from national government budgets.

Some 8.5 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS in Asia, out of the worldwide total of just under 14 million, according to UNAIDS figures.

Of the global total, 2.3 million are minors under age of 15, Landey said.

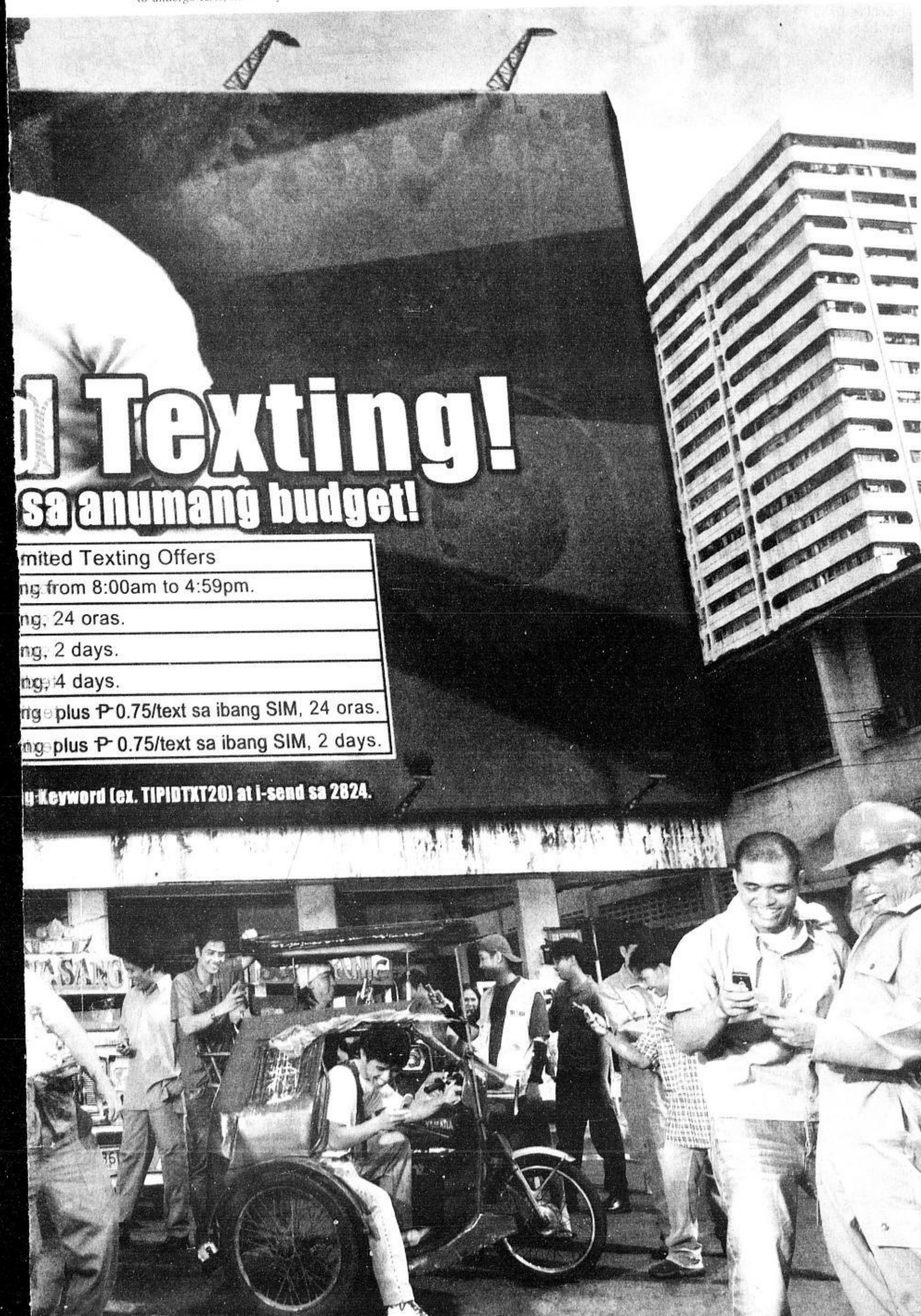
The first case of HIV/AIDS in the Asean populace was reported in 1984. By 1990, the virus had spread to all 10 member countries.

Two years later, the organization addressed HIV/AIDS for the first time as a regional concern during the 4th Asean Summit held in Singapore.

People infected

UNAIDS figures show the number of people living with HIV/AIDs in each Asean country, based on estimates in 2003 and then in 2005, as follows:

- Brunei—less than 100 people in 2005 (same estimate in 2003)
- Cambodia—130,000 in 2005 (150,000 in 2003)
- Indonesia—170,000 (110,000)
- Laos—3,700 (1,700)
- Malaysia—69,000 (57,000)
- Burma—360,000 (390,000)
- Philippines—12,000 (9,500)
- Singapore—5,500 (4,700)
- Thailand—580,000 (590,000)
- Vietnam—260,000 (210,000)



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LAKAS NG GLOBE

Asean inks terror pact

From page A1

the region that has seen some of the world's deadliest terror attacks by militants wanting to create a conservative Islamic enclave.

The pact appears surprisingly ambitious, given Asean's principle of decision by consensus and its customary reluctance to be seen as interfering in member country's internal affairs.

For instance, the convention says it could be used as a legal basis to extradite terror suspects in the absence of a two-way extradition treaty. Regular extraditions sometimes take years to negotiate.

The governments expressed their deep concern "over the grave danger posed by terrorism to innocent lives, infrastructure and the environment, regional and international peace," according to a copy of the convention.

The accord calls on the nations to improve regional cooperation to prevent attacks, and to rapidly share intelligence and relay terror warnings.

It also admonished the nations to curb terror financing and to undertake counterterrorism training, but stressed that no member country can wage antiterrorist operations in another.

The region was urged to strengthen its capability to deal with possible chemical, biological and nuclear attacks by militants.

In a bid to prosecute terror suspects faster, the convention encouraged authorities to use video conferencing in court proceedings and provide grounds for suspects' extradition.

Fair treatment of suspects

The accord guarantees fair treatment of suspects, and calls for efforts to rehabilitate those convicted in an attempt to prevent repeat attacks.

The pact is a culmination of Asean antiterrorism discussions and agreements that began after the attacks on the United States of Sept. 11, 2001.

The proliferation of terror attacks across Southeast Asia and the rise of Islamic extremist groups like Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf have added impetus to the effort.

Asean officials met in Bali last November to ensure the pact would be in harmony with national laws and regulations, and to come up with language to fit member countries' different legal systems.

Meeting on how to use pact

Indonesia plans to hold a meeting in March of six Asean countries and Australia, to discuss how the new convention could be best used.

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines forged an antiterrorism coalition a year after the Sept. 11 attacks. They were later joined by Cambodia and Thailand. The rest of Asean—Brunei, Laos, Burma, Singapore and Vietnam—had stayed out of the coalition.

One agreement signed yesterday was a commitment to draw up the region's first-ever charter, saying that "Asean has matured into a regional organization and is expanding its role as an integrated regional economy and a dynamic force in maintaining regional peace and stability."

After 40 years, a charter

"We are committed to establish an Asean charter as a crowning achievement of 40 years of Asean," they said.

The bloc has always acted in the past on informal consensus and refrained from interfering in each other's international affairs, leaving it open to criticism that it is little more than a "talking shop."

The issue has come up most often regarding the ruling generals of Burma (Myanmar), who have snubbed regional and international pressure to make concrete progress on its self-proclaimed "road map" to democracy and political reform.

Burma escaped censure at the UN Security Council on Friday when China and Russia used a rare double veto to block a US-backed resolution that would have called on the junta to release all its political prisoners.

The charter is to be drawn up and adopted later this year as the group—first founded by five nations in the heyday of the Vietnam War—marks its 40th anniversary.

Leaders endorsed a charter blueprint that allows for the possible expulsion of members in extreme circumstances, analysts doubt whether the group will take the hard step that would allow the outright punishment of its members.

But former President Fidel Ramos, one of the experts who helped draft the blueprint, warned Friday that Asean did not have the luxury of avoiding the kinds of rules that govern Europe and other blocs.

"We are going to be left behind," he said.

Ms Arroyo praised

In a press conference yesterday, Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi of Malaysia praised Ms Arroyo's deft handling of the Asean Summit which was postponed last month due to inclement weather and, many suspect, because of terrorist threats.

Badawi said that all the Asean leaders were briefed on the proposals of the group of experts for the transition to a rules-based organization, including plans to expel members for unconstitutional and undemocratic changes of government and human rights violations.

China, South Korea, India and Japan will hold summits with the 10 Asean leaders today. They will be joined by Australia and New Zealand Monday for the East Asia summit.

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OPINION

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Stop talking

THE PERCEPTION HAS GROWN OVER THE YEARS: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is nothing but a talking shop, a diplomatic paper factory, whose purpose is indistinguishable from its principal product: the circulation of communiques.

This is, by and large, an unfair perception, driven by such images as the swirling pageantry that surrounds the annual summit of the 10 heads of government. There are, in fact, existing arrangements that make Asean cooperation a reality. There is, in fact, an existing organization that promotes inter-Asean consultation, if not actual policy-making.

EDITORIAL

And yet the perception lingers. Consensus has grown on the need for Asean to do—or indeed to be—something more substantial. More than any other previous regional conference, the 12th Asean Summit being held in Cebu this weekend has seen that imperative evolve from a felt need to an articulated one.

The Asean's own Eminent Persons Group (EPG) has issued a set of radical recommendations for the heads of government to act on; from all indications, the Asean leaders will endorse the plan to write a "charter"—a framework for policy-making that is more binding on the member-states—in pursuit of greater regional integration.

A welcome and necessary initiative, but we must confess to being somewhat underwhelmed. We are concerned that certain conditions will conspire to prevent Asean from meeting this goal.

The natural forces of moderation in the region—old allies Thailand and the Philippines—have lost a great measure of influence in Asean matters, in large part because, in the last half-decade or so, they have been consumed by internal politics. We see this as unfortunate, not because other member-countries have not stepped up (they have, especially the other three original Asean members), but because the presence of the Philippines and Thailand—linchpins in every single regional grouping since the end of World War II—helps explain the regional bloc's appeal.

The worldwide war of attrition with fundamentalist terrorists—many of whom maintain bases in different parts of Southeast Asia—threatens to skew Asean's priorities. We do not mean to say that international cooperation in counter-terrorism is unimportant; it is, in fact, vital, and a necessary object of collaboration. But security cooperation does not seem to promise a solid basis for greater political and economic integration.

Not least, the problem of Burma (Myanmar) will continue to unsettle Asean. It is difficult to imagine that an organization as consensus-oriented as Asean would play hardball with the Burmese generals, who continue to embarrass the regional bloc with their aggressive abhorrence of democratic values.

We realize that the EPG's recommendations include the unprecedented possibility of imposing sanctions on an "erring" member-country. In the words of former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam, chair of the EPG: "The compliance to decision-making that has been arrived at by Asean on any particular issue or subject will have to be observed. If not, we give the power and space for the leaders of Asean to consider all possibilities in terms of enforcement which does not preclude expulsion in very, very, very serious cases of noncompliance."

Translation: Even expulsion is now on the table, if the big bosses choose to see it that way.

But does Asean have the political will to impose sanctions on Burma? We hope so, because even though we are firm believers in the politics of engagement, we also realize there are natural limits to it. But we doubt whether Asean will reach this stage; it seems to us a bloc-breaker.

To be sure, ex-President Fidel Ramos, a member of the EPG, suggests this kind of thinking is all wrong; instead, he exhorts all of us dwelling on the nitty-gritty of greater integration, we must act for the long term. "This is not about noninterference or interference or something in between. We're talking about Asean two generations from now."

If Asean's real struggle is with irrelevance, however, two generations is too long a time to wait.

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Surrender of sovereignty

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

ONE OF THE IMPORTANT BUT NOT RESOLVED issues in the custody case of Lance Cpl. Daniel J. Smith is which should prevail should there be an inconsistency between the Visiting Forces Agreement that he says supports his position and the procedural laws of the Philippines invoked by Judge Bernardo Pozon and the private prosecutor.

The recent decision of the Court of Appeals did not dwell on such conflict but simply interpreted the VFA as providing for the detention of Smith under Philippine custody in accordance with our own laws. In other words, the confinement of Smith in the Makati City jail during the period of his appeal was authorized under both Philippine law and the applicable sections of the VFA.

But assuming there is such a contrariety between our laws and the treaty, how should it be resolved? There is still no settled answer to such a question among the different jurisdictions of the international community notwithstanding the understandable preference of the United Nations for the treaty.

Some countries would uphold this view in keeping with *pacta sunt servanda*, the international law maxim calling for the observance in good faith of treaties as valid norms regulating the relations of states. This rule is recognized in Article 2, par. 2 of the UN Charter as one of the basic principles of the Organization.

It is argued that according to a settled rule of international law, "a sovereign cannot be permitted to set up his own municipal law as a bar to a claim by a foreign sovereign for a wrong done to the latter's subject." Other judicial decisions, however, have declared that "international law is law only as we adopt it and, like all common or statute law, it bends to the will of Congress."

In Art. II, Sec. 2 of our Constitution, the Philippines "adopts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land" but does not make them superior or inferior to the other component, which is municipal law. Our municipal law includes the Constitution itself which empowers the Supreme Court to nullify even a treaty if it violates our own laws.

The paramount rule in resolving an apparent disparity between international law and municipal law is to try to harmonize them if this is at all possible. Only if such conciliatory step cannot be taken or fails must the unavoidable choice have to be made between the two disciplines.

The ruling of Ichong v. Hernandez, 101 Phil. 1155, is instructive. This was a challenge to the constitutionality of the law which prohibited aliens from engaging in the retail trade in the Philippines. Among the grounds invoked was its supposed violation of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Treaty of Amity between the Philippines and China.

The Supreme Court said it did not see any conflict between the law and the treaties. But even if there were such a conflict, Justice Alejo Labrador said, it was the Retail Trade Nationalization Act that should be sustained because it was enacted in the exercise of the police power that, being inherent in the State, could not be surrendered even to a treaty.

The other relevant case is Gonzalez vs. Hechanova, 9 SCRA 230, involving the legality of executive agreements entered into by President Diosdado Macapagal with Burma and Vietnam for the importation of rice from those countries, but without the required certification from the National Economic Council of the scarcity of the cereal in the Philippines. In rejecting the President's act, the Supreme Court declared that he "... may not repeal legislative enactments by indirectly repealing the same through an executive agreement providing for the very act prohibited by said law. As regards the question of whether an international agreement may be invalidated by the courts, suffice it to say that the Constitution authorizes the nullification of a treaty not only when it conflicts with the Constitution but also when it runs counter to an act of Congress."

If the question had been raised, or if raised had been considered by the Court of Appeals, it would have had to follow the above decisions of the Supreme Court. Consequently, it would have upheld the position taken by Judge Pozon in retaining Smith in the custody of Philippine authorities as required by our own laws. That would have honored and enforced our sovereignty, without more.

There would then have been no necessity for the extended opinion written by Justice Apolonio D. Bruselas Jr. that, as it turned out, was all wasted effort because he said in the end that the petition did not have to be decided for having become moot. He had struck mightily with his right arm but surrendered meekly with his left.

The *ponencia* had been reduced to an academic lesson on how to interpret the law correctly but without antagonizing President Arroyo and her American superiors.

The miracle of fading away

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A FILIPINO WHO was questioned at the airport customs in Paris.

"What's inside these huge boxes?" the inspector asked. "Only bottles of water from the Lourdes Grotto," said the Filipino.

Upon sniffing the contents, the inspector said: "These are premium French wine!"

Whereupon the Filipino exclaimed: "Santissima! Water turned to wine! Another miracle from Lourdes!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Jn. 2, 1-11), Jesus performs His first miracle at a wedding in Cana by turning water into wine. From a businessman's point of view, Jesus could have cashed in on this, and He could have led a comfortable life by becoming a rich wine magnate or a much-sought wedding coordinator all over the land. But Jesus had other things in mind. In fact, He only had one thing in mind: to do the will and the mission the Father had for Him. Do you have the Father's will and mission in your mind? Is it just your agenda that's in your mind?

* * *

Jesus' whole life was a life pointing at the big picture. He always pointed to something or someone greater than Himself. Whatever miracles, whatever talents, whatever achievements He had were offered and directed toward the Kingdom of God, in obedience to the Father's will. His sense of purpose and mission was very clear.

As long as we are focused not on our small screens, but on the "big picture," as long as we are fired up by God's vision and mission and not just by our personal agenda or ambition, then we can go through any trial or persecution. We will not be disheartened by setbacks or delays, we will not be lured by worldly riches as we go on.

* * *

Jesus teaches us today how to handle worldly riches, fame and power—that is, not to handle them and not to be handled by them. He saw all these as just a means and not an end in themselves. And they are to be put at the service of the Kingdom of God. Today, think: How much of my money; how much of my fame and talents; how much of my power have I given to God for His pleasure and disposal? How much of myself am I giving to Him who has given so much to me?

* * *

If the miracle at Cana happened here and now, in the Philippines, imagine what a big media event, and what a doubly big political event it would be! It is sad that some people would stop at nothing just to put forward their personal, financial and political agenda. They would not even stop at God.

* * *

There is an interesting story about a woman who climbed the Alps with two experienced guides. As they neared the peak she ran toward the wonderful view and was almost blown away by the wind. One of the guides caught her and pulled her down saying: "On your knees, madam! You are safe here only on your knees." The story is a beautiful reminder for those in high places to learn to be humble and to really listen, not just prayerful. As long as a person sees himself/herself smaller than God, then, there is no problem. As long as he or she knows how to kneel before the people and before God, he or she will not fall.

* * *

From sacristan to bishop. This is a beautiful description of Fr. Pol Jaucian, SVD, bishop-elect of the Diocese of Bangued, Abra. Father Jaucian himself will be the first person to tell you of his humble beginnings as a son of our maintenance man in the Divine Word College of Urdaneta. He was a working student himself, and as fate would have it, he will be ordained a bishop on March 26, 2007 at Christ the King Seminary where he served as a sacristan in the '70s. Father Pol has many good traits, the best of which is his humility. Even as Father Provincial of the Philippine SVD Central Province, he continued his humble, joyful and sincere service to all. That is because Father Pol has remained focused and has not let high places make him dizzy with power. Neither has he let the flashbulbs distract him from his mission.

One with you, Bishop Pol! Our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen whose feast-day we celebrate tomorrow, smiles at you!

* * *

We are in the process of choosing our leaders again. Please choose leaders who know how to say "vote beyond me," and not those who say "vote for me." Let us also choose leaders who know how to say "in spite of me" and not those who say "because of me." Finally, let us choose leaders who always point at the big picture, and not those whose thick faces and pictures are splattered all over the place. In short, we need leaders who, like Jesus, know how to fade away, for God's greater glory, not those who will do anything, for a moment of earthly glory.

* * *

These days, let us incessantly pray this prayer: Lord, give us good leaders in our land, motivated by public service, not self-service, guided by a sense of mission, not ambition; leaders who knows how to fade away for your glory. Amen.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:
Lord, teach me how to fade away and to work for your glory. Amen.

The P26 billion should be accounted for

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

LAST SATURDAY, JAN. 6, THE INQUIRER REPORTED that "The President's traditional New Year call on the military top brass in their Camp Aguinaldo headquarter yesterday became a pre-procurement conference to finalize the shopping list of 14 major items to be bid out next week."

First of all, a slight correction. The commander in chief never calls on the military brass. It is always the brass who call on their commander in chief. The venue of the occasion does not matter.

The President's announcement of a P10-billion spending bonanza for the Armed Forces of the Philippines provided a good start for the New Year. Perhaps, she will also sign into law the bill, recently passed by Congress, fixing the terms of the AFP chief of staff and the service commanders.

Lt. Gen. Antonio Romero, the AFP vice chief of staff and head of the military panel for the upgrading of equipment, identified some of the big-ticket items on the shopping list: six refurbished UH-IH helicopters, 20 upgraded MG-250 attack helicopters, and several shallow water boats for the Navy. Romero added that the AFP already had P5 billion and was awaiting the release of the balance.

All these pronouncements are great for the morale of our armed forces and I share their hopes and aspirations for a decent upgrade—I will not use the term modernization—of the organization's capabilities.

* * *

More than 10 years ago, during the presidency of Fidel V. Ramos, the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992 (RA 7227) was passed providing for the sale of Fort Bonifacio and other military camps. It was later amended (RA 7917) to provide for the distribution of the proceeds from the sale in the following manner:

1) 35 percent to finance the self-reliance and modernization program of the AFP.

2) 27.5 percent to be retained by the BCDA to finance the construction and upgrading of infrastructure to make Clark Air Base and Subic more accessible.

3) 12 percent to finance the National Shelter Program.

Other beneficiaries were allotted smaller amounts and in the case of Fort Bonifacio, the municipalities of Makati, Taguig and Pateros were allotted 2.5 percent each. All in all, there were 16 beneficiary agencies.

The second piece of legislation directly affecting AFP, which came out also during the term of President Ramos, was RA 7898, which provides for the modernization of the AFP. Sec. 11 of this law calls for the establishment of an AFP Modernization Trust Fund to be used exclusively for the modernization program. The Fund would come from, among other sources, the proceeds of the sale of military camps as provided for under the BCDA law.

In October 1998, the Committee on Good Government chaired by Cagayan Rep. Edgar Lara held hearings on the subject of the proceeds from the sale of Fort Bonifacio. BCDA officials testified that they had remitted P26 billion of the proceeds from the sale of military camps to the National Treasury. In turn, the national treasurer testified that the funds were turned over to the Department of Budget and Management. Former DBM Secretary Salvador Enriquez Jr. also testified that the funds were transferred to the General Fund under the "one-fund concept" of government budgeting.

At that time, I raised the question of why the portion of the proceeds allotted to the AFP was transferred to the General Fund instead of being put into a Modernization Trust Fund as provided for by law. When money goes into the General Fund, it can be used for many purposes. By coincidence, there were reports that the Centennial celebrations in June 1998, including the construction of a Centennial Expo facility, cost a staggering P11 billion.

In a letter to Representative Lara, dated Oct. 8, 1998, national treasurer Leonor Briones informed the Committee on Good Government that of the 16 beneficiary agencies, all except one, received various amounts from 1995-1998, with the BCDA getting the biggest release to the tune of P4.3 billion.

Guess which agency got nothing? The AFP, which was supposed to receive the major share of the proceeds, failed to get a single centavo and no trust fund was ever established. Former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa testified before the Lara committee that he sent seven letters to the DBM requesting the release of funds for the AFP Modernization Program. All seven requests were turned down.

Today, we are seeing another P10 billion being set aside for the upgrade of the armed forces. The President says it comes as a result of "a vastly improved fiscal position." Well and good. But as we proceed to allot funds for the needs of the AFP, our people are entitled to an accounting of the proceeds from the sale of military camps.

Fort Bonifacio, an army facility, represented part of the historical legacy of our armed forces. It was sold primarily for the benefit of the AFP. The men and women of the AFP are entitled to know what happened to their share of the sale proceeds. We must have some accounting if we are to finally close the books on this dark page of the Ramos presidency.

A shooting and a marriage

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE ARE MANY MORE QUESTIONS LEFT unanswered in the killing of one Rafael de las Alas, 68, who was found, with a gunshot wound in the head, inside the Makati office of former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said Leviste had confessed to the shooting, allegedly in self-defense, but that no other details were available because Leviste is now confined in Makati Medical Center.

Tony Leviste is better known as the estranged husband of former Senator (and unannounced opposition senatorial candidate) Loren Legarda, from whom he has been separated for several years. But it was only a few months ago, during the book launching of her autobiography last December, that Legarda acknowledged what had been widely rumored for the last few years. The couple has two sons.

Binay says De las Alas is a long-time associate of the former governor's, so that makes the shooting all the more mysterious and intriguing. But I thought the former senator struck just the right note when she refused to speculate on what happened and said that, regardless of the circumstances—or perhaps it should be who's involved—"justice must be served and no one is above the law."

Still, the shooting of De las Alas and the confinement of Leviste in the hospital strikes a distressing coda to one of the more public and prominent of unions in the country. How could a marriage and a political partnership have disintegrated so totally and ended up in the pages of the political blotter?

* * *

WE don't know how and if the shooting will have an impact on Legarda's run for the Senate in the May elections. Certainly, she remains a most popular and recognized figure. Before she decided to run for vice president alongside Fernando Poe Jr. in 2004, she had acknowledged that she was taking a big risk because all the opinion polls had shown that she was sure to emerge as the top winner in that year's Senate race. Recent polls have placed her at the top of the list of potential candidates again.

Legarda and Leviste met when she interviewed him for her TV show on ABS-CBN, after her return from the United States, after a short-lived marriage and a stab at a broadcast career there. She had no problems reviving her career on her return, as this was during the heady, exciting post-Edsa days; and in the following years, Loren would emerge as the "face" of the network, anchoring its prime-time news program and hosting an award-winning public affairs show.

She would parlay this popularity and public credibility into a political career, her broadcast persona providing the ideal jumping board to the Senate.

And beside her in this odyssey, from TV personality to senator was Tony Leviste, who had no qualms playing consort to his beautiful and accomplished wife.

* * *

I MET the couple soon after a column on "durian," that aromatic and pungent fruit from Davao, came out. I don't think Loren was into politics yet, but still they invited me for a "wine, cheese and durian" session at their penthouse in the Leviste-owned condominium in Makati because they happened to be avid durian lovers themselves.

Another memory that has to do with Leviste was watching him perform magic tricks, which he had studied and perfected during political rallies to entertain the audience in the course of Loren's campaigns.

Though unabashed in his affections for his wife, even publicly declaring that he was proud to be the "automatic toothpaste dispenser" for his wife, getting her toothbrush ready every morning, Leviste also admitted to having differences with Loren, the most glaring being her negative vote on the Visiting Forces Agreement, which he apparently favored.

But even if I followed Loren's political career as she gambled a sure Senate seat for a stab at the vice-presidency (she would have been president after Poe's death had FPJ been declared winner in the polls), I must confess the news of the Legarda-Leviste separation came to me rather late in the game.

There were rumors swirling about the cause of the cracks in this once-solid marriage, but every marriage is always private territory, and only the two people involved—not even the children—can tell for sure why the relationship failed.

The shooting of De las Alas has brought the spotlight once more on the Legarda-Leviste ex-union, and on Loren Legarda, possible senatorial candidate. But it's the joke-cracking, jovial and magic trick-performing Leviste on whom my thoughts and prayers are on at the moment.

* * *

MY SYMPATHIES to the family of the late Cecilia Arnaldo Gutierrez, especially to her daughter Chin-Chin, an actor, singer and environmental advocate, and a sister in the TOWNS Foundation.

Arnaldo-Gutierrez died late evening Friday after a lingering illness.

You may recall that the home of Chin-Chin, where her mother also resided, burned to the ground over the holidays, and while both Chin-Chin and her mother escaped the fire, it was a close call. In a TV interview, Chin-Chin explained that she was forced to jump from the second floor of her home, where the fire started, to the ground floor because she was worried about the oxygen tanks in her mother's bedroom. Long bedridden, Chin-Chin's mother was depending on the oxygen to help her breathe. And while Chin-Chin was able to bring her mother out of the house despite second-degree burns, she lost everything in the fire including her beloved pets.

It surely is a most trying, distressing time for Chin-Chin, the other members of her family and her friends. I can only hope she finds a measure of peace after this time of trial. Arnaldo-Gutierrez now lies in state at the Faith Chapel of Arlington Memorial Chapels on Araneta Avenue. Interment details to follow.

Bush's surge of madness

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

IF YOU WERE AN IRAQI TODAY WHO CARES deeply for his country, what would you do? Your country, previously one of the most modern in the Arab world, has been reduced to rubble. A weak government, installed by the United States, desperately tries to enforce order in a society wracked by sectarian violence and an anti-imperialist guerilla war. This government cannot exist a day longer without US military support. Would you ask the American troops to leave? Or would you ask them to stay until they have cleaned up the mess they created when they invaded your country?

We do not hear the voice of the Iraqi people in this war, neither do we feel their pain. It is as if the whole world has mindlessly taken the experience of America as its own. And so the problem of Iraq is framed solely in terms of how the war can be brought to an acceptable end without further expenditure of American money, lives and pride. Hardly anyone thinks of the future of Iraq from the perspective of the Iraqi people themselves.

It is interesting that we are told exactly how much has been spent in this war ($400 billion), how many American soldiers have been killed (3,000), and what percentage of the American people believe their country is losing the war in Iraq (57 percent). Yet we have do not have the faintest idea what the total damage to Iraqi property and facilities has been so far, how many Iraqi lives have been lost since the US invasion, and how many Iraqi people today still believe they have a country they can call their own.

To all intents and purposes, the nation-state that is Iraq is no more. The government headed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki bears all the markings of a puppet government. It has military control in only three out of 18 provinces. It has no administrative presence in these provinces. It cannot even maintain order in Baghdad, the seat of government.

If the Americans abandon Iraq today, chances are it will be dismembered. The Kurds will declare a separate state; so will the Sunnis. The Shiite majority will be torn between those loyal to Iran and those dependent on America. As in the past, the oil wells remain the principal object of contention in this war. The US is fully aware that control of Iraqi oil, an unacknowledged objective of the invasion, would slip from its hands once the territorial integrity of Iraq is breached. George W. Bush assumed that Iraq's neighbors had an interest in preserving the wholeness of Iraq. He was wrong. Not one among them seems bothered by the grim scenario he paints: which is, that once the US-backed post-Saddam government fails, radical Islamic terrorists will use Iraq as a base from which to destabilize the rest of the moderate governments in the Arab region.

Bush tapped into a vein of American paranoia when he issued the order to invade Iraq in March 2003. The line he peddled to the American people was that the Iraqi government was a threat to all Americans and to their way of life. He accused Iraq of harboring weapons of mass destruction, and of being the main financier of the Sept. 11 attacks. All these were later proven false. But the die was cast. Global propaganda for the US invasion made Saddam Hussein, this monstrous oppressor of his own people, the public face of the whole Iraqi nation.

Two months after the US invasion of Iraq, Bush announced "mission accomplished" in Iraq. "The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror," he said. He forthwith proudly declared the inauguration of Iraqi democracy. Today, nearly four years later, Bush admits that the war is far from won, and that it is necessary for the United States to augment its present troop levels to complete the mopping-up operations against sectarian militias and insurgents. When that is done, he says, the Iraqi government must assume the burden of completing the unfinished business of maintaining order and rebuilding the country.

How do you deal with a thoughtless man like this? On a shallow pretext, he led his country to war. He told them it was going to be a short and swift engagement. He now says he miscalculated. But instead of admitting that the war was a gigantic mistake from the start, he argues that pulling out now would be very costly. He blames the puppet government for inefficiencies in the field. He pleads for more money and troops to undertake one final "surge."

My prediction is that the insurgents and the militias will only burrow deeper during the surge, assuming the US Congress will not stop Bush's surge of madness. A semblance of peace and order will be momentarily achieved in and around Baghdad, and then the withdrawal of troops may start with American pride intact. But the civil war will resume even before the last Coalition soldier will have left. This is the quagmire that is Iraq today. This is the scandal that the world should never have allowed.

Many countries today are run by tyrants like Saddam. In our part of the world, Burma's generals easily come to mind. But, like it or not, they hold the nation together, and, in not a few instances, may even lead the country to some level of economic prosperity. We know that their "success" can never justify the oppression of their own people. Yet it is absurd to bring democracy to such societies by invading them, or to hope to build effective governments upon their ruins. For people to become active participants in their own liberation, the yearning for freedom must first take root in their hearts. The ramparts of a democratic nation are always built in the course of the struggle for freedom itself. They cannot be raised overnight, or, much less, assembled from without.

(Comments to public.lives@gmail.com)

Central Asia's other Turkmenbashis

WORLD VIEW

F. Stephen Larrabee

A DICTATOR'S SUDDEN DEATH ALMOST ALWAYS TRIGGERS political instability. But it is doubly dangerous when it poses a risk of region-wide destabilization and a scramble for influence among the world's greatest military powers—the United States, Russia and China.

The sudden death in late December of Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan's authoritarian president-for-life who declared himself "Turkmenbashi" (leader of all Turkmens), jeopardized stability in a country that is becoming an increasingly important supplier of energy to Europe. Worse, given the absence of a clearly designated successor and the weakness of civil society and other political institutions, his death could have repercussions across Central Asia.

Indeed, Niyazov's demise highlights the broader problems of Central Asia's post-Soviet regimes, which, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, are run by Soviet-era bosses who, while not nearly as eccentric or egomaniacal as Niyazov, tolerate little dissent or opposition. Most of them are old, some of them are unwell. So, in the next few years, Central Asia will face leadership changes on many fronts, with security apparatuses—which, as in Turkmenistan, have been crucial to buttressing these countries' regimes—likely playing important roles.

How these transitions turn out will matter for several reasons.

First, Central Asia is an important source of energy. The Caspian region accounts for 2 percent to 3 percent of the world's known oil resources—about equal to that in the North Sea. While far smaller than the deposits in Saudi Arabia or Iran, Caspian oil could prove important if oil production falls or is reduced for political reasons elsewhere.

Much of this Caspian oil is in Kazakhstan, giving that country a critical role in the regional energy market. Moreover, Kazakhstan's strategic importance has increased as a result of recent revelations that the country's Kashagan oil field will produce 25 percent more than initially expected at peak production.

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are also major exporters of natural gas. Russia depends heavily on Turkmen gas for domestic consumption and export abroad, which could prove vital as demand rises over the next decade.

Second, Central Asia's leadership transitions could tempt outside powers to exploit the resulting instability and spark a struggle for influence. Because the region was part of both the Soviet Union and the Russian empire, President Vladimir Putin's Kremlin regards it as part of Russia's natural sphere of influence. Putin's efforts to transform Russia into a major energy power and use energy as a tool of Russian foreign policy make the region all the more strategically significant.

Moreover, China has sought to improve trade and transit ties with Central Asia over the last decade, reflecting its growing interests there. Not only is the region important for meeting China's growing energy needs; Chinese authorities are also concerned about separatist pressures among the Uighur population in Xinjiang province and the impact of ties with Uighurs in neighboring Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Like Russia, China wants a reduction of the US military presence in Central Asia. Both powers have sought to use the Shanghai Cooperation Organization—a regional grouping that includes Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—as a vehicle to pressure the United States to withdraw its military forces from the region. However, this cooperation represents a short-term, tactical marriage of convenience rather than a budding new strategic alliance. In the long run, Russia and China are likely to be rivals for power and influence in Central Asia.

Iran could also view the transitions in Central Asia as an opportunity to expand its regional influence, particularly given its close ethnic and cultural ties with Tajikistan and its long border with Turkmenistan. And, like China and Russia, Iran has no desire to see the United States filling any security vacuum that could emerge as a result of leadership changes in Central Asia.

Pakistan and India—especially the latter—will also watch carefully how the transitions will play out. Both countries have growing strategic interests in the region. Like China, India views Central Asia as an important future energy supplier. As a result, India has quietly begun to strengthen its military ties to countries in the region, particularly Tajikistan, where it has a small base.

Finally, the transitions in Central Asia could have a strong impact on US interests. As long as the United States remains involved militarily in Afghanistan, access to facilities in Central Asia will remain important. With the loss of the use of the base at Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan, access to Manas airfield in Kyrgyzstan has become the main means of re-supplying US troops in Afghanistan from Central Asia.

However, the political situation in Kyrgyzstan is far from stable. Discontent with President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's rule is rising. A leadership change or increased Russian and Chinese pressure on Kyrgyz leaders could precipitate calls for a renegotiation of the agreement regarding access to Manas—or even demands for its termination altogether.

In the 19th century, the struggle for mastery in Central Asia between the Russian and British empires was called "The Great Game." Today, there are many more players involved, and the stakes—energy security, above all—are far higher now. America, India, Europe and Japan will face increasing tension between their short-term military needs in the region and their long-term goal of promoting political reform in order to create more stable and reliable partners.

Indeed, the key challenge in the years ahead will be to find the proper balance between these two objectives. Given the prospect of further leadership changes and increasing instability, meeting that challenge has never been more important.

Project Syndicate

F. Stephen Larrabee holds the corporate chair in European Security at the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research organization.

THEY SAID

Unacceptable

"The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people, and it is unacceptable to me ... Where mistakes have been made, the responsibility rests with me."

—US President George W. Bush on the US-Iraq war

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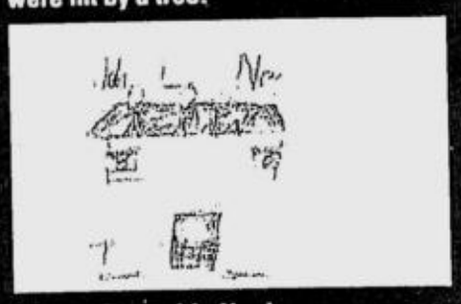
Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

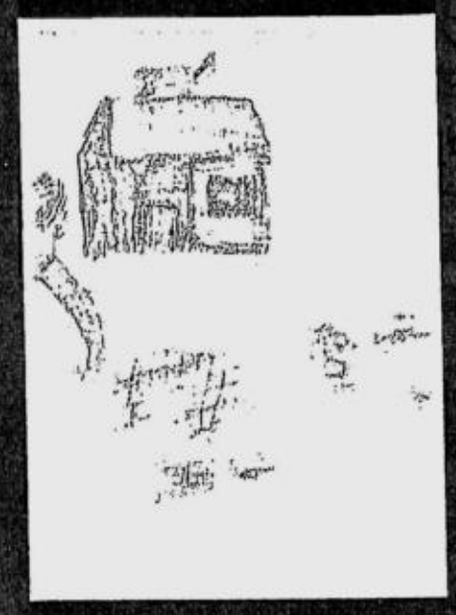
TALK of the TOWN

NAME: Lea Loma
AGE: 11
ABOUT THE DRAWING: During the typhoon, she and her family fled to the barangay hall to seek shelter. They were all crying. She also heard other people crying for help. Mudflows buried the Loma house. She saw dead people she knew, like Tiya Loleng and Richelle (her friend). She said the two were hit by a tree.

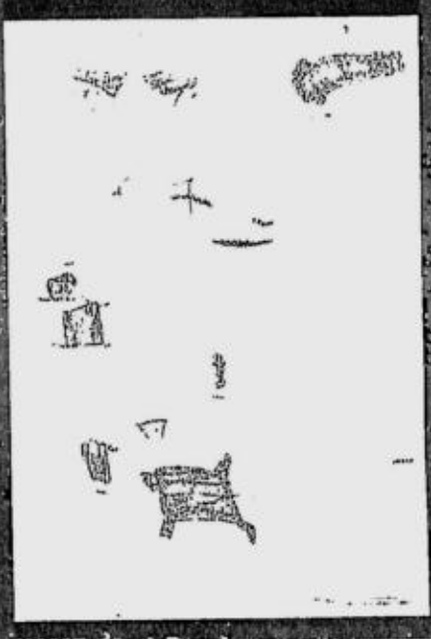


NAME: Reynaldo Nacion
AGE:11
ABOUT THE DRAWING: His mother and siblings spent the entire night on the roof of their house as the flood was rising. His three other siblings were brought to the evacuation center. He saw his mother crying. All of them feared for their lives and they cried. He hopes that a typhoon will not visit Albay province again. Typhoons now scare him.

NAME: Jeric Mosquite
AGE: 9
ABOUT THE DRAWING: His father said he heard someone crying outside their house. When his father opened the door, they found that the water was already waist-deep. Someone told them that the water was going to rise further and that they should transfer to the huge building nearby. He saw GI sheets flying and toppled trees.



NAME: John Christian Yohanon
AGE: 8
ABOUT THE DRAWING: While mudflow was rising inside the house, he and his family were forced to transfer to a nearby concrete building. He saw many things being carried away by the mudflow, including a pigpen. His pet dog was brought to the roof of their house. He said his family was soaking wet because of the rain and flood and his mother almost died of hypothermia. They were saved when a truck came to their rescue the next day. Their house was destroyed by the mudflow but their dog was still alive.
He wishes for only fine weather and no typhoons.



NAME: Mark Daryl Encinas
AGE: 9
ABOUT THE DRAWING: At the height of the typhoon, while he was on the roof, he saw floodwaters carrying away people, boulders, pieces of furniture, trees and other things. "Nakakita ako ning tulong tao na piga-anod. Maitumon su tubig. Natakot ako ta tibaad maanod man kami. (I saw three people being swept away. The water was so dark. I was scared we might be swept away, too.)," he said.
After the typhoon, he did not see the people who were swept away by the flood along with their house.

NAME: Eloisa Faye Velasco
AGE:6
ABOUT THE DRAWING: She vividly recalled the flooding during the typhoon. When the water was rising, she and her family went to her grandmother's house. Luckily, her family's house was not destroyed. Her grandfather helped fix it. Since the typhoon, she and her family have been living at the Binitayan Elementary School in Daraga, Albay.

PHOTOS BY NINO JESUS ORBETA, INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Kids 'draw and tell' to heal wounds

"HAPPY 4TH BIRTHDAY KYLA!" WAS THE STREAMER, ALONG WITH BALLOONS, that her parents put up about two weeks ago at their abandoned house in Padang, Legazpi City. The house is half-buried in lahar.

Children were among the more than 1,200 people who died in Albay when Supertyphoon "Reming" hit the Bicol region on Nov. 29 last year.

Among the fatalities were Darielle, 15; Ariel, 13; Aprielle, 11; and Ramiel, 10—children of Ariel Llaguno Sr., a civil engineer working in Qatar, who was in contact with his family until the last moments when their three-story house in Barangay Busay in Daraga, Albay was destroyed by mudflows from the slopes of Mt. Mayon.

Also killed were Llaguno's wife, brother, sister, his sister's two children, and three others who sought shelter in the house, said Ofel Sy, a cardiologist in Legazpi.

Darielle was a third year student at the Philippine Science High School in Goa, Camarines Sur.

The tragedy that was Reming is etched on the minds of children who survived the typhoon.

Weeks after the typhoon struck, the dominant feelings of the survivors staying in evacuation centers were anger, fear, sadness and guilt, according to counselors.

A child, who lost a three-year-old sister, is not talking. Another child bangs his head on the floor at night, blaming himself for the death of his younger siblings.

To help them recover from the trauma and stress, social workers and counselors from nongovernment organizations are conducting stress-debriefing sessions.

Children are given paper and crayons so they can draw what they went through during the typhoon. The drawings featured here were done by children from Barangay Binitayan in Daraga. —*Editor*

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA ON A CHILD

5 years old and younger
- fear of separation from parents
- crying
- whimpering
- screaming
- immobility
- aimless motion
- trembling
- frightened facial expressions
- excessive clinging
- regressive behaviors such as peeing on the bed at night

6 to 11 years old
- extreme withdrawal
- disruptive behavior
- inability to pay attention
- refusal to attend school
- outbursts of anger
- fighting
- bodily symptoms without medical basis
- depression
- anxiety
- feelings of guilt
- emotional numbing

12 to 17 years old (adolescents)
- flashbacks
- nightmares
- emotional numbing
- avoidance of any reminders of the traumatic event
- substance abuse
- problem with peers
- antisocial behavior
- withdrawal
- isolation
- physical complaints
- suicidal thoughts
- school avoidance
- academic decline
- sleep disturbances
- confusion
- extreme guilt over his or her failure to prevent injury or loss of life
- harboring revenge fantasies

SOURCE: DSWD

PAGE DESIGN BY ERNIE SAMBO

By Ephraim Aguilar

LEGAZPI CITY—CHILDREN'S drawings in refugee camps here vividly illustrate the tragedy that Supertyphoon "Reming" brought to Albay.

The simple crayon strokes on white paper convey fear, sadness and hope.

After the typhoon, dubbed by residents here "as the worst in history," Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) sessions were conducted in various evacuation centers by the Department of Social Welfare and Development-Bicol and by nongovernment organizations.

"Draw and tell" was the method used by social workers in dealing with the traumatized children in evacuation centers after the supertyphoon destroyed their belongings and homes, and killed their loved ones.

The drawings vary depending on the children's experiences. Some show dead bodies floating on floodwaters while others depict toppled trees and roofless houses.

Crying for help

Some drawings show human emotions such as women and children crying and desperately shouting for help.

Ma. Corazon Pitero, social welfare officer at the DSWD, said social workers would first let the children narrate their experiences during the disaster by drawing.

The social workers discuss the drawings with the children, asking about what they drew, why they drew it, and what they felt when they were in that disaster situation.

Pitero said it was important to give these children an outlet to release their emotions after the traumatic experience to prevent adverse effects from haunting them *(See table on the effects of trauma)*.

Stress

The dominant feelings of the children affected by Reming were fear and grief because many of them almost died or lost their relatives and friends, Pitero said.

Lea Loma, 11, temporarily housed in Binitayan Elementary School in Daraga, Albay, said that after the typhoon, she saw the bodies of "Tiya Loleng and her friend Richelle" before they were picked up by retrieval teams.

"My mother and I went to the village to check on our house after the typhoon, until I saw their bodies on the ground. They were people I knew," Loma told the INQUIRER in Filipino.

"Richelle was my playmate. I feel sad that I will never see her again," she said.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

CHILDREN from Barangay Tagas in Daraga, Albay draw on Jan.2 at the Binitayan Elementary School what they went through during the typhoon.

Almost all the children told the INQUIRER that they heard people crying when the floodwaters rose and torrents of loosened sand and rocks from Mt. Mayon swamped their village.

Some children, who stayed on rooftops, told of having seen old and young people and animals drowning or being carried away by the strong current. They also saw galvanized iron sheets and objects being blown away by the winds.

John Christian Yohanon, 8, said he saw his mother almost die from the cold. They were wet all night and were rescued the day after the typhoon. He also pitied their dog that was left on the roof, the only part of the house that could be seen while the rest was underwater. These details were shown in his drawing.

Terrified

Most of the children said they were terrified at the height of Reming and wished that no other typhoon like it would ever hit Bicol again.

After the social worker's interaction with the child, the last stage of the stress debriefing session was "processing."

In "processing," the social worker gave inputs to the child to make him or her understand the disaster and, more importantly, to tell him or her what he or she would do if the disaster happens again, according to Pitero.

"We make them understand that what they felt during the tragedy was just a normal reaction of a person to an abnormal situation. We also help them create a contingency plan in preparation for other disasters," Pitero said.

After the session, the social workers identified those who need follow-up and those who have to be referred for further psychological evaluation.

Closure

Stress management is part of the social services in First World countries and is normally offered even to people who suffer from the loss of loved ones who died of natural causes. In the Philippines, it is associated more with disasters.

The DSWD started using CISM in the country during the killer earthquake that devastated Baguio City on July 16, 1990.

CISM has been a mainstay in disaster operations of the DSWD in Bicol for more than a decade now—the region being prone to natural calamities such as typhoons and volcanic eruptions.

It was first used in Bicol by social workers during the 1993 Mayon Volcano eruption that left some 100 people dead and thousands displaced.

Pitero said CISM was meant to open the wounds of disaster victims, heal them, and help them find closure to enable them to move on.

(Ephraim Aguilar, a resident of Legazpi City, is a correspondent of Inquirer Southern Luzon.)

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3 weeks of rains cause closure of major Eastern Visayas road

By Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—HEAVY RAINS that have been pouring into Eastern Visayas the past three weeks have caused the closure of a major route for motorists traveling from Luzon to Mindanao, according to Department of Public Works and Highways officials here.

The landslide-prone Agas-Agas road section in Southern Leyte has again been closed to traffic after heavy rains hit the area for the past few days. The road section is part of the Mahaplag-Sogod-Libagon-Liloan Road, which is part of the Maharlika Highway that connects Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Jaime Pacanan, DPWH regional director, said that because of rains that might have already saturated the loose soil and caused a landslide at Agas-Agas, motorists have been advised to take the alternate route along Bato-Bontoc Road.

But Pacanan said that aside from the Agas-Agas road and the road connecting Palapag and Lapinig towns that is ongoing construction in Northern Samar, all other national roads in the region are passable now.

"Despite our limited resources we are able to respond to whatever damages that occurred on our roads that had been affected (by the continuous rains)," he said.

Carlos Veloso, DPWH district engineer for Southern Leyte, said that damages to national roads in his area were estimated to be P26.5 million.

Citing a weather bureau report, Veloso revealed that the rainfall gauge reading in the Agas-Agas area had reached 200 mm last Jan. 9.

"The last time that a 200 mm rainfall was recorded was in February last year when the Guinsaugon mudslide occurred," he said, referring to the Feb. 17, 2006 landslide that buried the entire village of Guinsaugon in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte.

Veloso said that if the rains will stop for two to three days, they would reopen the Agas-Agas road to traffic. Travel time is an hour longer when motorists take the alternate route.

In Eastern Samar, the DPWH has closed to traffic a portion of the national road in Giporlos town, where a 27-meter road slip occurred last December. The road is along the South Samar Coastal Road.

Pacita Galvan, district engineer for Eastern Samar, said the two-day closure of the road this weekend was made to allow them to strengthen the Bailey bridge that was installed on the damaged road section.

Galvan said continuous rains have also hampered the repair and rehabilitation of the Borongan-Taft asphalt road.

2 Mindanao regions hit by floods; 4 dead

SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL SUR—AT LEAST four people were confirmed dead while three others were declared missing as floodwaters, triggered by days of incessant rains, continue to rise in Caraga and Southern Mindanao regions.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Caraga said the latest recorded fatality was a 9-year-old boy from Barangay Sayon in Sta. Josefa, Agusan del Sur.

The OCD Caraga said Jeboy Labareño, the fourth confirmed fatality in the region, drowned while trying to cross a foot bridge on New Year's Day. The boy's death was reported by his parents only on Friday.

The others killed in the floods were Lemuel Serrano, 15, of Barangay Sampaguita in Veruela, Agusan del Sur; Josephine Gonzales, 43, of Barangay 9 in Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte and Rosalia Tabiad, 60, of Barangay Malicato in Las Nieves, also in Agusan del Norte.

Rolly Maboy, 12, of Barangay Bakingking in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur; Rustom Diploma, 5, of Barangay Cubo in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur and Roberto Palpas, 31, of San Miguel, Surigao del Sur remained missing.

In Compostela Valley, at least 11 miners cheated death after the opening of the tunnel they were digging in Nabunturan town collapsed, trapping them inside on Thursday.

Antonio Cloma, operations chief of the OCD in Southern Mindanao, said the cave-in at Barangay Mainit was apparently caused by the softening of the soil due to the continuing bad weather.

Rains have been battering many parts of Mindanao since late last year.

Cloma said the miners were freed after more than 10 hours of rescue efforts by their fellow miners.

He said the OCD has been warning miners to refrain from operating their tunnels because landslides could occur in them.

"We have already alerted all mining sites, especially those who are on Mt. Diwalwal to be very careful and take extra precaution. We have also readied our emergency units if ever similar incidents will occur," Compostela Gov. Jose Caballero said in an interview over a radio station in Davao.

In the past, dozens of miners were killed in similar cave-ins in mining sites in the region, including Mt. Diwalwal.

In Don Marcelino, Davao del Sur, trees toppled by strong winds cut off power supply. Although the Davao del Sur Electric Cooperative (Dasureco) has already sent a repair team, a large area of the town remain without power as of Friday.

Don Marcelino Mayor Fidel Sasuman also reported that the floods destroyed cornfields in many villages but no casualty has been reported so far.

Malita town agriculturist Leoncio Salamanca said the floods also destroyed about P1 million worth of crops.

The OCD in Caraga, meanwhile, said the total number of people displaced by rising floodwaters has already reached 36,546 families or 150,198 persons. These came from 194 villages in the region's four provinces.

Local officials of Sta. Josefa and Loreto towns in Agusan del Sur have already declared their areas under a state of calamity because of the increasing amount of damage wrought by the floods.

Cloma said a state of calamity has also been declared in the towns of Kapalong. Braulio Dujali, Carmen and Asuncion in Davao del Norte. *Chris Panganiban, Dennis Santos, Jeffrey Tupas and Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

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PMA cadets have been warned about politicians who may attempt to campaign inside the academy, for the May mid-term elections. While overt political campaigns were made in the past PMA leaders say they're now on the lookout.
EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

PMA officials anticipate poll gimmicks during homecoming

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS OF THE PHILIPPINE Military Academy are anticipating intense political campaigning inside their campus because of candidates belonging to their alumni who will attend the annual homecoming in February and the graduation in March.

Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent, said the PMA Alumni Association has prohibited overt signs of political campaigning during the homecoming.

"But our ability to enforce [the PMAAA directive] is limited to the rules we will enforce inside the academy. PMA is merely the host of this [annual event, which is organized and run by the alumni association]. We will see how it goes because this is essentially an affair of the whole Armed Forces of the Philippines," Maligalig said.

The presence alone of Senate President Manuel Villar, an honorary member of PMA "Masikap" Class of 1977, and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, an honorary member of PMA "Hinirang" Class of 1987, "should make the event interesting," according to a top PMA official.

Both these classes are involved in this year's alumni celebrations on Feb. 16 and 17, as the year's jubilarians, the source said.

The PMAAA has chosen Villar to be this year's guest speaker.

"We cannot say what [Villar] will end up reflecting on when he addresses the alumni. Campaigning in previous homecomings was obvious. There were streamers, there were [campaign pins]," the source said.

One of the recent visitors of the academy was former Philippine National Police chief, Director General Arturo Lomibao, who distributed wallet-sized calendars to soldiers and policemen in the city during the Christmas holidays.

Lomibao, a member of PMA Class 1972 and now head of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), earlier told reporters that he was considering a Senate seat under the administration party or running for Pangasinan governor.

Maligalig has not imposed any restrictions on the cadets. He said the PMA merely guides cadets on how to react when they are approached by candidates or when they review and discuss political information they obtain from newspapers, television or the Internet.

"Our [instructions are] for them to be circumspect, [when they] exercise their right to vote. [But] I also reminded [PMA officials] to discuss with cadets the constraints of being in uniform," he said.

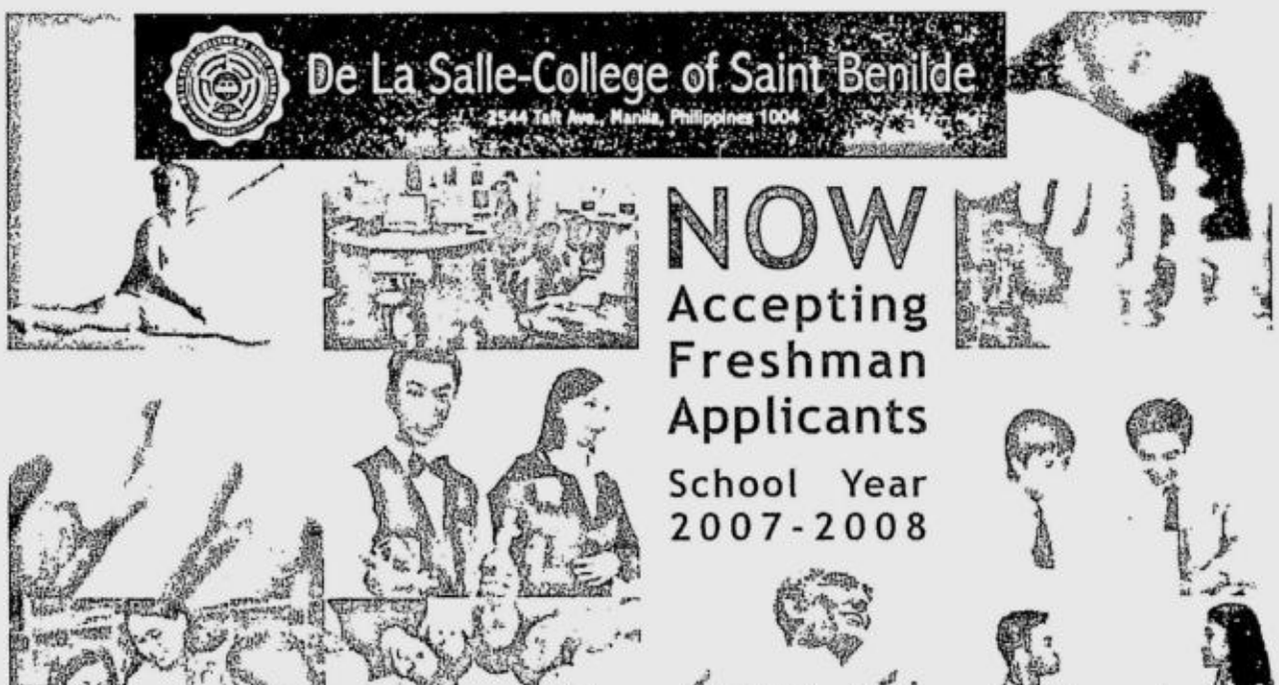
Article XVI, Section 4 of the 1987 Constitution says: "The Armed Forces shall be insulated from partisan politics. No member of the military shall engage directly or indirectly in any partisan political activity, except to vote."

But politics is always a favorite academy topic, particularly among cadets, some PMA officials told the INQUIRER.

"Many of the cadets are curious because one of their own professors has political ties," a PMA teacher said.

Capt. Arlene Orejana-Trillanes, who teaches computer courses, is the wife of detained Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV who declared his intentions to run for senator.

Orejana-Trillanes, who is on a study leave in Australia, has kept a low profile, despite the fact that she is well known for being one of the first seven women cadets to graduate from PMA in 1997.



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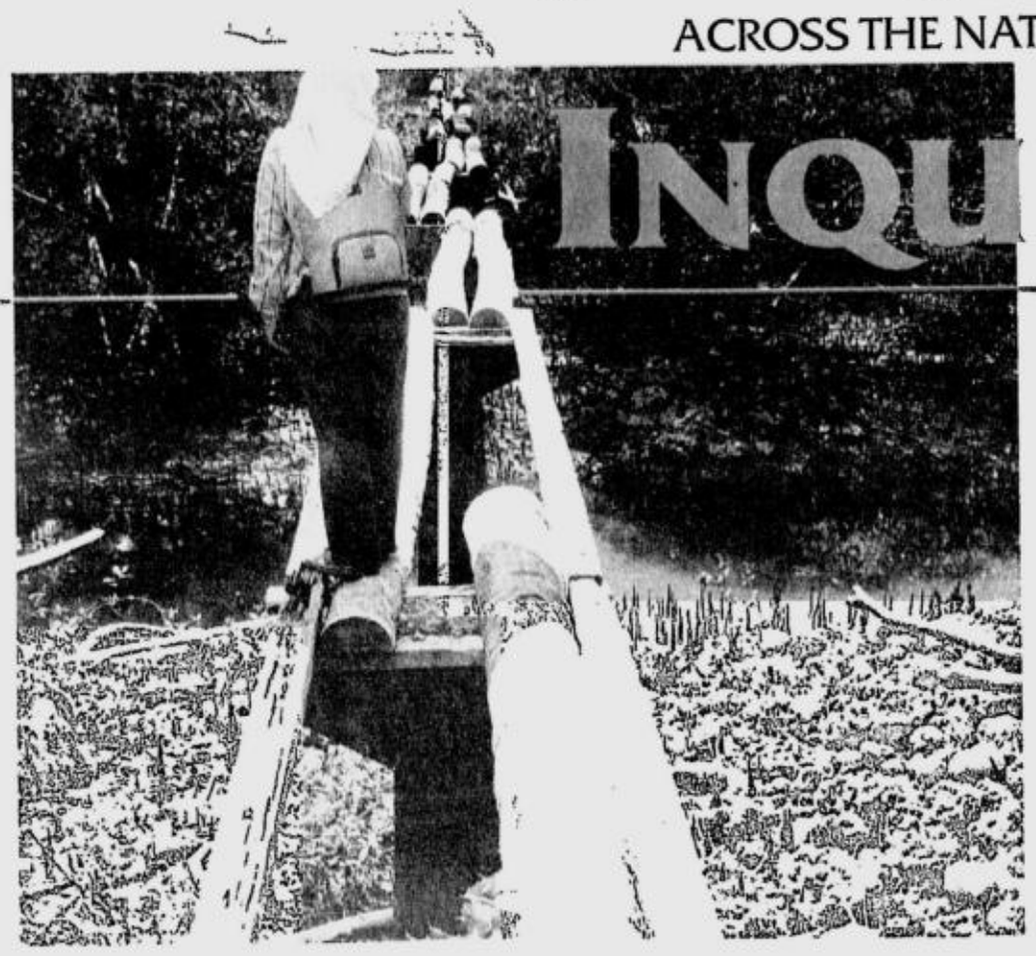
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Nico A. Alconaba
INQUIRER Mindanao

Island kids suffer from lack of bridge



CONTRACTORS have left this 50-meter footbridge in Barangay Tukamaror in Bongo Island, Shariff Kabunsuan unfinished.
PHOTOS BY NASH MAULANA

By Nash B. Maulana
Bongo Island, Shariff Kabunsuan

SCHOOLCHILDREN HERE have to brave the cold morning rains as they cross the rough sea on small motorized boats to go to school.

A sickly village leader. Taib Aragasi showed the INQUIRER a half-finished 50-meter footbridge that schoolchildren and teachers could have otherwise used in going to the nearest school in Barangay Tutungasapo, from the island's northernmost tip in Barangay Tukamaror.

Aragasi said the footbridge had been left undone by its contractors for almost 10 years. Some residents, however, suspect that some boat operators may have influenced some politicians against finishing the bridge, leaving residents with no choice but to take small pump boats to and from an adjacent village where their children go to school.

"This may be [the result of a] clandestine political compromise among influential sectors and some people running for public office," a resident said.

About 20,000 people live in this island of seven barangays where roads and bridges hardly exist. About 200 Grades 4 to 6 and high school students have to take the boat ride for 35 minutes every day to go to school in the nearby village because no road or bridge have been finished to link the island to the next village.

Aragasi said members of the Iranun tribe of the poverty-stricken Bongo Island in Shariff Kabunsuan province could hardly earn a kilo of rice in a day of working mostly from municipal net fishing, seasonal copra harvesting and selling raw bananas reaped from backyard gardening.

The island has been known in jest during election periods as the source of "*bariles* votes," which means that boat operators could deliver "captive votes" like the tuna fish that abound in the Moro Gulf.

Aragasi said the United Nations Multi-Donor Program has collectively put up mini-infrastructure projects in Tukamaror, such as a post-harvest farm warehouse and a solar dryer. But those projects have rarely been in use in recent years.

Residents said the local cooperative of seaweeds growers and fishers had received seven small motorized boats from the defunct Support with Fast Transition-Enhanced Livelihood Assistance Program (SWIFT-Elap) which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Overlapping

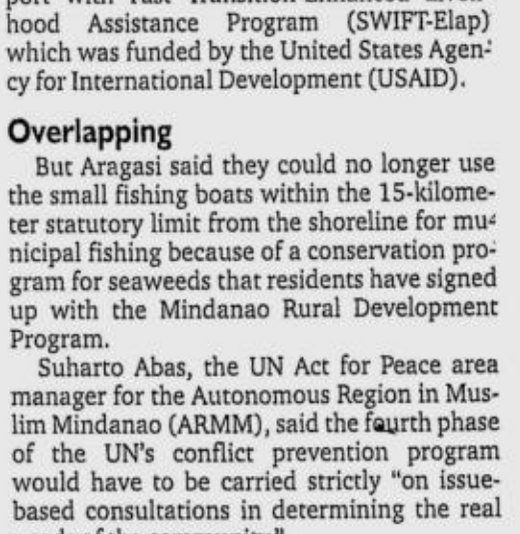
But Aragasi said they could no longer use the small fishing boats within the 15-kilometer statutory limit from the shoreline for municipal fishing because of a conservation program for seaweeds that residents have signed up with the Mindanao Rural Development Program.

Suharto Abas, the UN Act for Peace area manager for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said the fourth phase of the UN's conflict prevention program would have to be carried strictly "on issue-based consultations in determining the real needs of the community."

Some islanders said they were used to earning easy-money from smuggling of blue-sealed cigarettes from Borneo to Cotabato during the days before martial law was declared in the 1960s.

Aragasi said many had since sought refuge in Borneo, but had been recently been affected by the Malaysian government's crackdown on illegal aliens from Mindanao.

Still, many of its residents have left the island for Metro Manila where they engage in small scale livelihood activities like selling cooked food and serving as middle persons for the recruitment of domestic helpers and laborers to the Middle East.



BONGO Islanders pray in this community mosque in Barangay Tukamaror so that children may be spared from disasters.

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A WAITING SHED submerged in mud and volcanic materials serves as a reminder of the tragedy that befell this village in Albay right after strong rains and floods brought down tons of boulders and mud from Mayon volcano. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Batangas gov suspended over computer scam

BATANGAS CITY—THE OMBUDSman has suspended Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez, who sent his supporters barricading the provincial capitol in a bid to prevent the serving of the suspension order.

Tension engulfed this city yesterday as 500 supporters of Sanchez trooped to the provincial capitol.

The suspension order for six months was signed Friday afternoon by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, almost 18 months after Batangas Vice Gov. Ricky Recto filed a corruption case against Sanchez for allegedly rigging a P350-million computerization project of the province.

The multimillion-peso real property tax computerization project was bagged by Automatic Data Processing Technologies Inc. (ADPT) and Generation E-Systems Inc., whose biggest shareholders—Geraldine Enriquez for ADPT and Marigrace Murillo for Gen-E—are both Sanchez's nieces.

Sanchez had been identified as the "jueteng" lord of Batangas for 11 times during the Senate investigation on jueteng in 2005 and was the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group's prime suspect in the murder of Batangas Ombudsman Guillermo Gamo who was investigating anomalous deals and projects at the capitol before he was killed.

Aside from security personnel, a six-wheel truck was placed at the capitol's locked main gate apparently to block anybody who would serve the suspension order on Sanchez.

A provincial government shuttle bus with license plate RDZ 913 and Toyota van with license plate SDS 761 were likewise positioned to block the opening at the capitol's second main entry point, where the offices of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of the Interior and Local Government are located.

Although Sanchez was nowhere to be found at his office, his provincial administrator, lawyer Ronaldo Geron, was present at the building and presided over the meeting of several department heads and other political supporters of the governor.

A capitol insider said that after the meeting, the office heads were ordered to stay on until Monday, when the suspension order is expected to be served, and gather 3,000 supporters to prevent the DILG from serving the suspension order.

But the local police kept off from the area.

Senior Supt. Zaide, Batangas police director, said he saw no reason to deploy his men to the capitol complex.

Zaide said although there was a massup of the governor's followers, "they are not causing any trouble or inconvenience."

"If I deploy police officers there, people might get agitated. People might put color to it," he said. *Marlon Ramos and Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Pinatubo survivors give hope to Albay folk

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—SURvivors of Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions and lahar onslaught in Pampanga are turning themselves into hope-givers to Bicolanos who bore the brunt of a similar tragedy in November last year.

Convened by the Archdiocese of San Fernando's Social Action Center of Pampanga (Sacop), Kapampangan leaders on Thursday night laid out the details of what was described as the "most coordinated, most diverse" response to the Bicol disaster.

They are assembling the assistance—goods, funds and body of experience, lessons and expertise in disaster management—under a solidarity mission dubbed "Kabalen Caravan to Bicol (From Pinatubo to Mayon)."

It is set to start in mid-February and to be done in coordination with the Diocese of Legazpi's Social Action Center.

Spirit of hope

"We hope to reciprocate the goodwill and charity that flowed from countless groups during the 1991 eruptions and recurring lahar rampages in Pampanga after the blasts," said Fr. Deogracias Kerr Galang, Sacop executive director.

What the mission mainly sought to do, he said, was "share the spirit of hope."

"The Kapampangans struggled to overcome the disaster in ways ranging from self-help to organized actions in communities. It is in this sense that we'd like to inspire Bicol residents to take initiatives to build lives and communities again," Galang said.

The priest called the rebuilding process a difficult task, citing the experience in the province located east of Mt. Pinatubo.

"But it can be done," he said.

As of Friday, the mission had involved the Pampanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Clark Investors and Locators Association, Cybercity Teleservices, local governments of the City of San Fernando and Guagua, Pampanga Disaster Response Network, Save Pampanga Movement, Save San Fernando Movement, Inocencio Magtoto Memorial Foundation Inc., Pampanga Press Club and people's organizations in the resource-mobilization campaign.

Galang said several of those groups started their respective drives last December. The city government of San Fernando raised nearly P1 million through a television marathon.

Similar events

Cybercity donated computer software called Inbound/Outbound Aid Management System and Victim Monitoring System to the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council in Albay.

Sacop is trustee to the "lamac" (offerings) given during the 50th canonical coronation of Virgen de los Remedios, patroness of Pampanga.

He said more groups, individuals, schools and corporations are being invited to join the mission to provide long-term forms of assistance to Bicol residents as lahar flows are expected to be recurring events in that region.

The caravan includes relief distribution, medical missions, discussions for cooperation between local governments in disaster preparedness and rehabilitation, and program support for community organizing, livelihood and resettlement.

It will also hold a forum where at least six speakers from Pampanga will share how their communities and organizations worked to overcome the disaster.

Galang said the mission would give priority to residents and communities that have been hardest hit, least helped and still at high risk.

At the meeting, the leaders found similarities in the nature of the disaster that struck Pampanga and especially Albay.

Like in Pinatubo, strong rains from typhoons such as "Reming" on Nov. 28 mobilized lahar from the slopes of Mt. Mayon, devastating mostly Sto. Domingo, Legazpi, Daraga and Guinobatan.

As of Dec. 4, 496 people were reported dead, 716 missing and 1,207 injured.

The mission is seen as a touching chapter in the country's history of disaster response because, through it, "victims-turned-survivors can also be hope-givers," said organizers.

Kapampangans who want to support the mission can contact the secretariat through Sacop at 0919-335-0303, (045) 860-5338/961-4112 and sacop-@comclark.com.

12 traders' groups ask labor to drop wage bid

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—TWELVE BUSIness and planters groups in Negros Occidental yesterday issued an open letter calling on labor groups to rethink their stand on a P125 legislated wage increase, saying it will spell doom for businesses.

The business and planters groups said they are against wage fixing by Congress and instead supports a "properly studied" wage increase handled by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards.

The House has passed a bill seeking a P125 across-the-board wage increase to be implemented over three years. The passage of a counterpart bill in the Senate is being awaited.

"Let us have a closer scrutiny of the impact and repercussions of a legislated wage hike," the business and planters groups said.

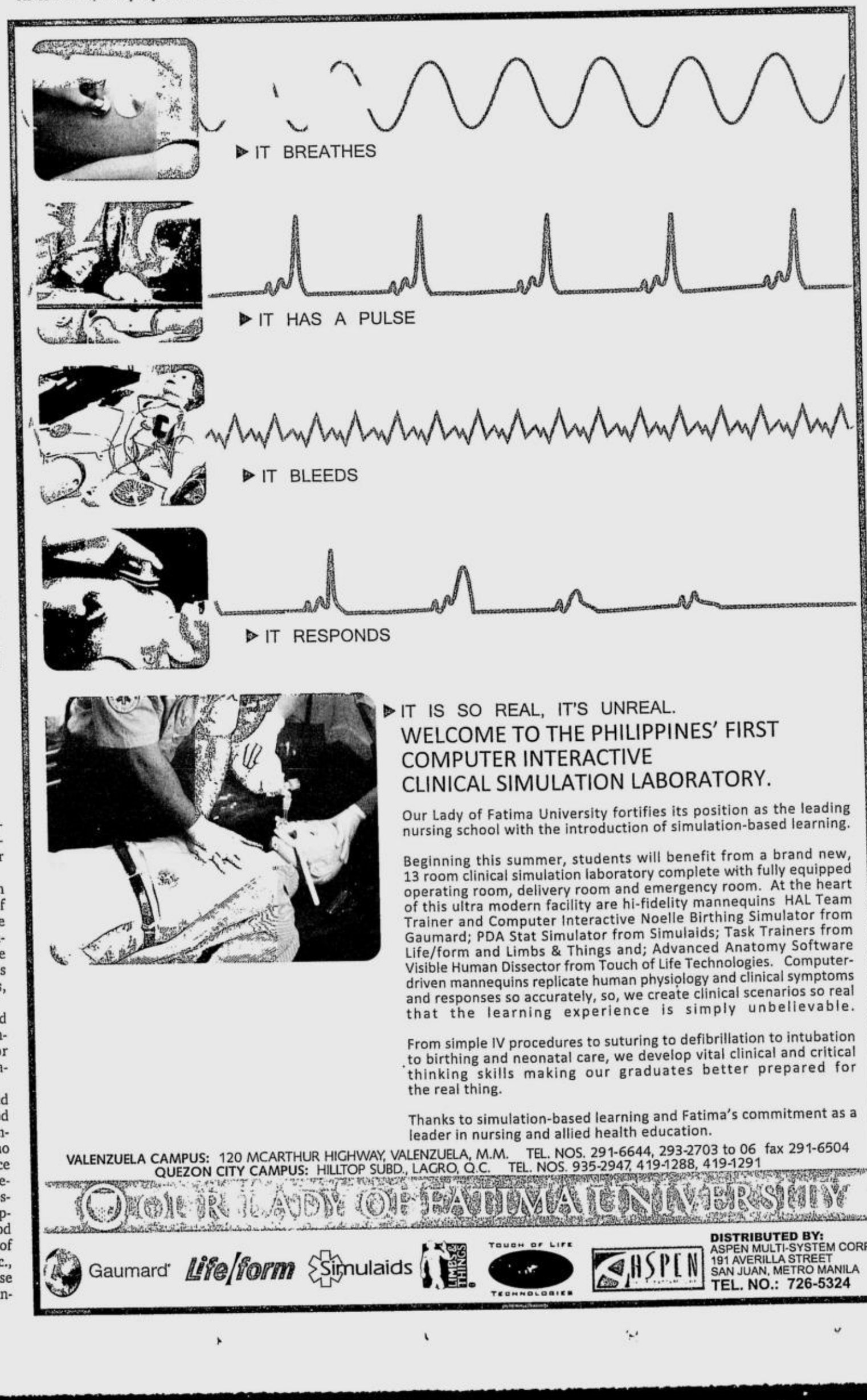
They said a legislated wage increase would result in more miseries because millions of workers will lose their jobs due to massive layoffs.

This will be an offshoot of various micro, small and medium enterprises closing or reducing their workforce, they said.

Investors will also be driven away because of the high cost of labor and production, and more underground economic ventures will flourish beyond the reach of regulating authorities at the expense of consumers, they added.

They also said a legislated across-the-board wage increase will leave no room for collective bargaining negotiations.

Among the groups that signed the letter were the Metro Bacolod Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Northern Negros Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of Negros Producers Inc., Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines Negros Occidental, Bacolod Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., Southern Negros Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



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Election season officially begins today

By Jerome Aning

TODAY MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE 150-DAY ELECtion period for the May 14 congressional and local elections. A public gun ban is in effect; movements or transfers of government personnel are on hold.

During this period, the Commission on Elections, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, becomes more powerful by virtue of its authority to deputize any government agency to ensure free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections.

Beginning tomorrow, those interested in running for the Senate or local government posts may start filing their certificates of candidacy.

James Arthur Jimenez, Comelec education and information department director, said the agency was busy with its preparations, including the holding of biddings for materials it would need for the democratic exercise.

Even if the 2007 national budget has not yet been passed, Congress and Malacañang had assured the Comelec of a steady stream of cash for the May 14 elections, he said.

Jimenez said the Comelec would be coming out this week with the final count of registered voters for 2007. The Comelec estimated this May's voters will reach as many as 49 million, requiring the increase in poll precincts from 286,000 to about 310,000.

Based on the Comelec's schedule, local election offices should have finished hearing applications for registration and the transfer of voters' records last Friday.

Today, the Comelec's committee on absentee voting will start preparing its certified list of overseas voters, which is expected to number around 500,000.

The election period will last until June 13.

Party-list groups may also file their manifestations of intent to participate in the elections.

The filing period for senators and party-list groups ends Feb. 12, while that for local officials ends on March 29.

The campaign periods for each category begins the day after their respective filing periods end and should stop on May 12.

ABALOS

'Abalos,' other Comelec execs' ouster to restore credibility'

By Jerome Aning

A COALITION OF NONGOVERNMENTAL groups yesterday called on Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and two other commissioners to step down and restore to poll body's credibility.

The Consortium on Electoral Reforms (CER) said Abalos and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra and Florentino Tuason were "tainted."

The three election officials were almost impeached for their alleged complicity in the P1.3-billion election automation contract that the Supreme Court voided in 2004 for violating bidding rules.

Then there is the still unresolved "Hello Garci" scandal involving former Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and President Macapagal-Arroyo's alleged plot to rig the results of the May 2004 presidential elections.

"They should acknowledge that as an institution, the Comelec's credibility has been compromised and, therefore, they should resign by command responsibility," CER chair Ramon Casiple said.

CER, composed of 45 NGOs and other sectoral groups, made the demand as the election period started today.

"If they remain in office and the public still perceives the Comelec as [being] without credibility, there is a great danger that the results [of the elections] will be again become an issue," Casiple said.

Not quitting

Abalos, meanwhile, has dismissed CER's appeal for him to resign, reiterating that doing so would be tantamount to admitting that he did something wrong.

In a phone interview, he appealed to critics of the Comelec to stop questioning the credibility of the commission's officials.

Abalos said those who were defeated in the 2004 elections should have a "character change" and "accept the truth that they are losers," to prevent electoral protests from clogging the Comelec.

He stressed that Garcillano had acted alone and was never able to influence the outcome of the 2004 elections, adding that Ms Arroyo was the real victor in the presidential race.

Faith in poll body

Abalos said the high number of potential candidates for the midterm congressional and local elections, as well as the clamor by disenfranchised voters to extend the registration period, contradicted the allegations that the electorate had lost its faith in the poll body.

"If it's true that the Comelec could not be trusted anymore, no one would be interested in participating in the elections," he said.

Casiple said that if Abalos, Tuason and Borra could not be pressured into resigning, the President should fill, as soon as possible, the seventh and remaining vacant seat in the Comelec commissionership with a person known for his non-partisanship, competence and integrity.

"This will tip the balance [toward] new commissioners untainted by the 2004 election fiasco," Casiple said, referring to newly appointed Commissioners Rene Sarmiento, Romeo Brawner and Nicodemo Ferrer.

Tie-breaker

The appointment of a new commissioner would be good, in case a tie-breaker was needed in a decision, Casiple said.

The seventh commissioner could also take on some of the duties and oversight functions that the six commissioners had been sharing, he said.

Casiple, who is also executive director of the Quezon City-based Institute for Political and Electoral Reforms (Iper), also suggested that the new commissioner should be young so that he could perform his duties energetically.

The new appointees at the Comelec included Brawner, a retired presiding justice of the Court of Appeals; Ferrer, a retired associate justice of the Sandiganbayan, and Sarmiento, a former presidential adviser on the peace process and a former Iper director.

"Gusto ko makita ni mister ang makulay naming Bagong Taon."

A plus METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Poor kids were his inspiration in being the best he could be

By Tina G. Santos

EVERY WEEKEND FOR THE past 14 years, Clemente Domingo III, "Third" to his family and friends, has brought bright but poor boys aged 5 to 15 from his community in Poblacion, Muntinlupa into a "club" of sorts.

The 28-year-old creative director of JimenezBasic Advertising hopes that the Poblacion Boys Club (PBC) he established in 1993 at the age of 15 will be the first step toward a brighter future for the kids—by inspiring them to think beyond the dark and cruel streets of their impoverished community.

He also wants them to value the importance of hard work, perseverance and the relentless pursuit of education to achieve success.

"I was always playing with underprivileged kids when I was growing up. Most of them were not in school or were forced to drop out to help their parents earn a living," said Domingo, the only child of a prison guard father and a public school teacher mother. "I was lucky because I was able to go to school."

He said his playmates inspired him to strive and excel in almost everything he did.

According to Domingo, he put up the club, whose first members were his former playmates in the neighborhood, to serve as a support system for poor boys. He hopes it would help steer them toward a meaningful life and away from vices in the mean streets.

"This is my way of giving something back to society and thanking those who helped me become what I am now," the father of two young girls, aged 5 and 7, said.

Right now, PBC has 17 members, most of them street children, who are taught "anything and everything under the sun," Domingo added.

"I teach them different things—from grooming, proper hygiene and first aid to catechism, values formation and good manners. Everything I know, I pass on to them," he said. "*Ito yung mga batang mas malutong pa magmura kesa sa atin* (These are kids who curse more than we do)." He has also gotten them involved in physical activities such as basketball, mountain climbing, hiking or at times, just stargazing.

Over the years, he has seen the changes in his boys.

"Many of those in the old group now have their own families and good jobs," Domingo added. "It is fulfilling to inspire children to learn new things."

Once in a while, he asks his friends to join him in various activities with the children.

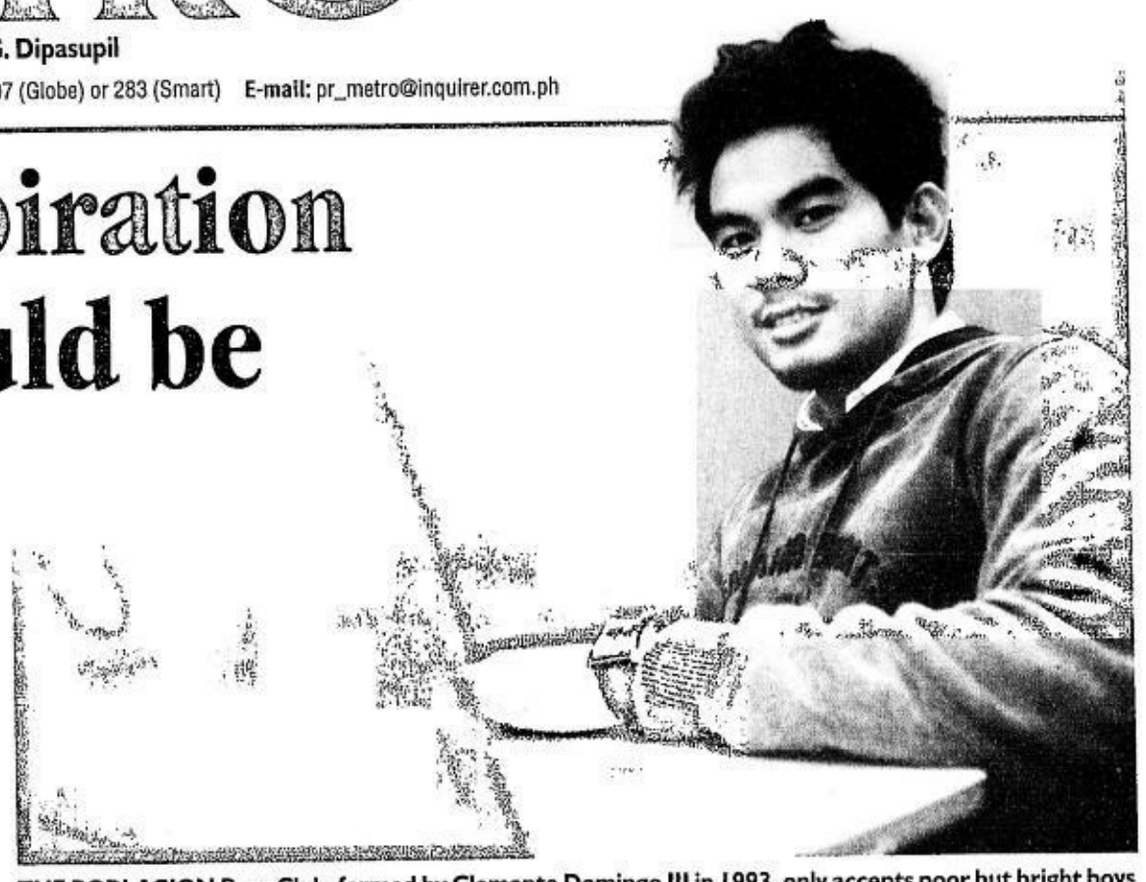
"I encourage them (his friends) to experience what I have experienced, and somehow make a difference in the lives of these young boys," he said.

Domingo told the INQUIRER that being around children has made him realize his aptitude for teaching.

Apart from writing scripts for commercials for JimenezBasic Advertising, he teaches integrated marketing communications, including advertising, art directing and copy writing at his alma mater, the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P).

"I think it was in the company of these kids that I honed my teaching skills," said Domingo, now on his fourth year as a professor at UA&P. "*Mahilig pala akong magturo*. I love sharing what I know and learning from my students."

He said he feels a different high when he sees his students excel. Many of them, he added, now work in different companies and advertising agencies.



THE POBLACION Boys Club, formed by Clemente Domingo III in 1993, only accepts poor but bright boys as members.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Domingo was a consistent honor student since grade school. He graduated valedictorian from the Muntinlupa Elementary School, got a scholarship from the Southridge Night School where he received an academic excellence award and graduated second in his class.

His above average record continued in college where he took up mass communications. He did his post graduate studies at UA&P, also on a scholarship.

Domingo was also good in extra-curricular activities and sports like chess, basketball, ping pong and soccer. He was also a theater actor, director and writer and was the youngest winner of the Likhaan Award for Literature at the University of the Philippines' Writers Workshop for Poetry.

"I don't want to be idle, I want to learn all the time, 24/7," he said. "I hate not doing anything. I read, watch DVDs, whatever, as long as I learn something."

Last year, Domingo was named one of the Most Outstanding Citizens of Muntinlupa for his participation in the city government's various youth projects. His co-awardees included former President Fidel Ramos, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and former Solicitor General Frank Chavez.

He has also had his share of professional success. He was part of the advertising team that created commercials that earned local and international acclaim from Ad Congress, Creative Guild of the Philippines, Araw Values Award, KBP Radio Awards, London International Advertising and the New York Advertising Festival, among others.

"Working hard is mandatory for success," Domingo said. "Your work is your prayer and you can only offer your work as a prayer if you excel in it. That's why as much as I can, I try to excel in my work."

Although most people would think that the awards he has received are the only way of gauging his success, Domingo said he thinks differently.

"Success is not so much what you have achieved or what you have become but what others have achieved and what they have become because of you," he said, quoting a phrase he read in a book that he said has become his motto.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

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Text us your feedback:
inquirer gp name/age/city/message
to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Muslim engineer comes home, builds houses in Sulu

By Emman Cena

YEAR AFTER YEAR, PEOPLE MAKE THEIR OWN NEW Year's wishes and resolutions. For a successful overseas worker, engineer Michael Rasul Abubakar only wishes "a nation without slums" for this year. And this is no steer.

While most would agree that addressing the issue of homelessness in conflict-stricken Sulu is too far-fetched, the native son of Sulu believes otherwise. In fact, even before Ramon Magsaysay awardee Antonio Meloto had his Gawad Kalinga housing project, Abubakar had started building homes in his hometown Patikul.

Armed with 23 years of work experience as civil engineer in Saudi Arabia, Abubakar started the low-cost housing project in Patikul in year 2000 hoping that he would soon rebuild his community which, at that time, grappled with "lawlessness and poverty."

In just six years, his venture flourished tenfold building decent and affordable homes for his community through The First Sulu Estate Subdivision.

Dream community

With the rise of the first rate subdivision, Abubakar has reconstructed not only homes but also lives. His brainchild showcases modern communities having complete amenities, cemented roads with sidewalks, effective drainage system, and a 24-hour supply of water and electricity.

"I envision The First Sulu Estate as a model community, a repository of the future leaders of Sulu where people can grow up and be reared in the most ideal environment," the 66-year-old Abubakar says.

Mickey, as he is called, says he aspires to help revitalize Sulu by working on a project that would help change people's negative perception of Sulu and its people.

The First Sulu Estate has since shown impressive progress, wielding economic activities and employment for more than 80 families in Patikul. The project, according to Abubakar, is sustainable with the support of the Sulu government and its people.

He has so much faith and hope for Sulu that he anchored his lifelong work on the future of Patikul after his stint as resident engineer at Wilson Murrow in Saudi Arabia.

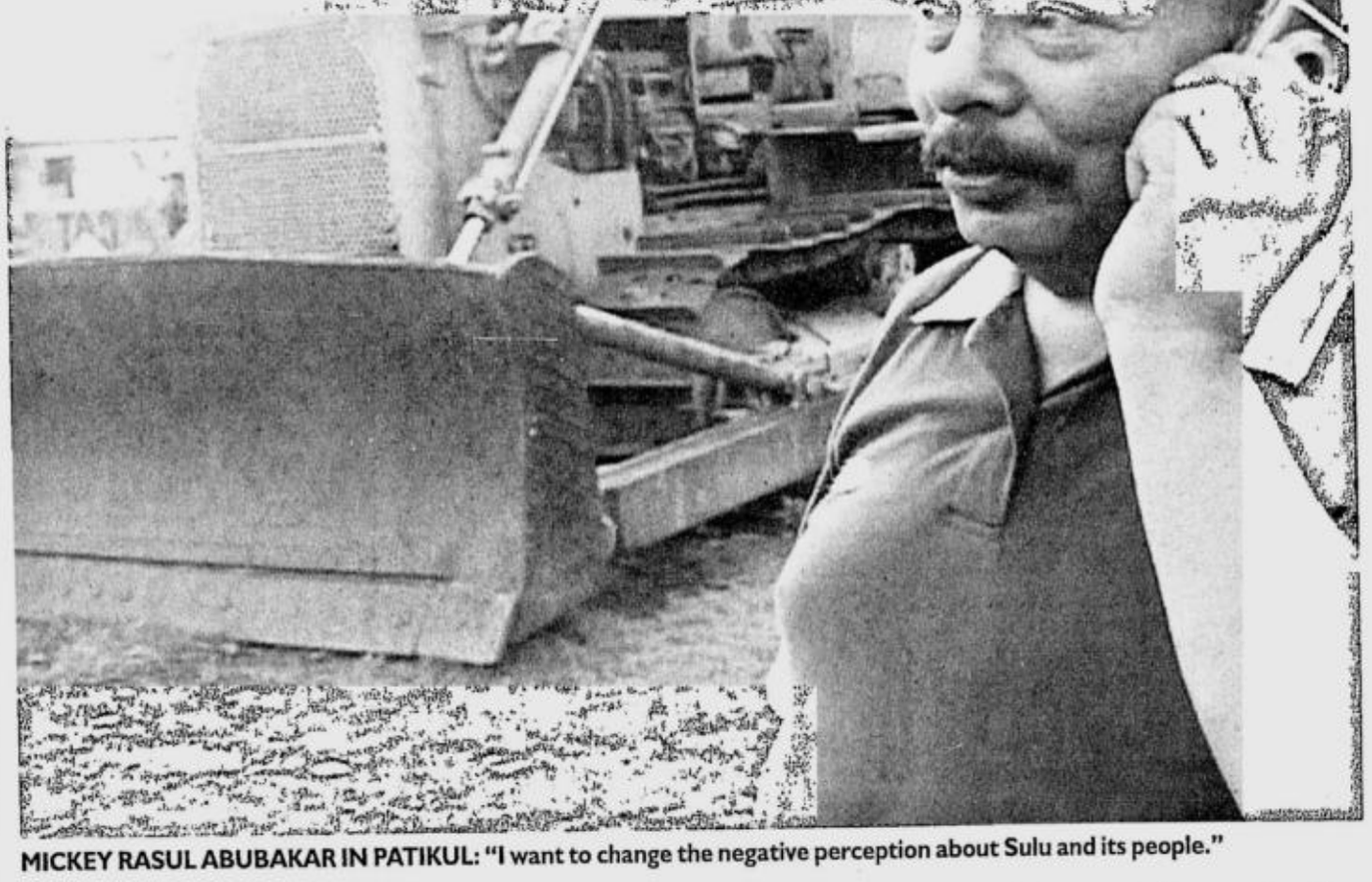
"My work is one way of instilling inspiration, hope and belief that Sulu has the development potential. Given the chance, what is possible in other developed cities and provinces is also possible in Sulu," he says.

"In the same way, what is possible through First Sulu Estate in Patikul, Sulu can also be possible in all municipalities of Sulu," adds the engineering graduate from Mapua Institute of Technology.

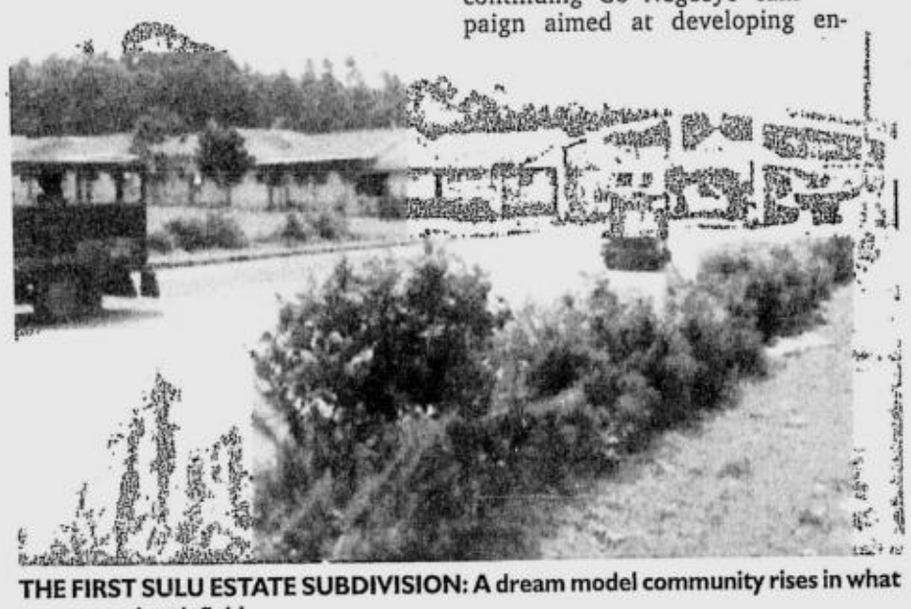
Go Negosyo awardee

Recently, Abubakar was awarded for being one of the five outstanding Overseas Filipino Entrepreneurs by the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship, an award given by PCE as part of the Go Negosyo para sa OFWs.

The Go Negosyo is part of the continuing Go Negosyo campaign aimed at developing entrepreneurship in the country. It also aims to complement the happiness of OFWs reunited with their families by exposing them to business opportunities.



MICKEY RASUL ABUBAKAR IN PATIKUL: "I want to change the negative perception about Sulu and its people."



THE FIRST SULU ESTATE SUBDIVISION: A dream model community rises in what was once a battlefield.

"The award would accentuate my passion to awaken the long-abandoned aspiration of the people and communicate a strong message which is powerful enough to mobilize Sulu's entry to a sustainable peace process," Abubakar says. "My goal to revitalize Sulu is grounded on my belief to do something greater than I am."

Tough decision

Abubakar first envisioned the "slum-free" blueprint of Sulu while coming home from abroad. Upon seeing his hometown mired in "poverty and lawlessness," he took it upon himself to reach out to his community. With the help of his wife Dr. Onnong Sangkula-Abubakar, he put up the M. Abubakar Consolidated Engineering (MACE) after returning from abroad in 1996.

"I'm an engineer. I will rebuild this city," says the father of five successful children—two of whom are doctors, one is a councilor, a company supervisor and the youngest, a nursing student. The latest addition to the family is a 5-year-old special child adopted at age 1.

But like any other Cinderella stories, his success is the fruit of sheer hard-work, determination and courage.

Born and raised in Jolo, Sulu, Abubakar, along with his wife, left the country in 1973 to work in Saudi Arabia. Leaving behind four very young children at that time was a very tough decision the couple had to make.

Years later, the children followed them when the company agreed to pay for their resettlement. Hence, all the children practically grew up at the jobsite and had their primary education completed at the Pakistani International School in Saudi Arabia.

Knowing that life could be peachier for his family oceans away, Abubakar flew to Saudi Arabia as a civil engineer but continuously rose to higher positions. From a resident engineer earning $1,500.00 a month, he soon became a project engineer and manager earning $6,000.00 a month.

Investments in real estate

He was able to invest in real estate back home. In 1974, just over a year of overseas employment, he purchased a property in posh Ayala Alabang Village worth P370,000 that he managed to sell for P14 million in 1987. He continued to invest in real estate, which has always provided him with the best long-term payoffs.

In 1988, he came back to the Philippines to pursue a postgraduate course at the Asian Institute of Management where he got his Masters in Management diploma. He also completed an administrative management course at the Ateneo de Manila University Graduate School of Business in Makati City.

In 1990 after two years of postgraduate studies, he went back to Saudi Arabia to finish his obligations and hand over the previous projects he had started. After six years, with all the experience and skills he had mastered for 23 years working abroad, he came back to the Philippines and established the construction company.

Small beginnings

After making a name for his new construction business in Manila, the idea of bringing development to hometown Sulu never ceased to bother him. He soon put up the MACE. He then focused MACE's operations on building decent and affordable abodes in Sulu; small beginnings which would then be known as The First Estate Subdivision in Patikul, Sulu.

"I am for the long haul, batting the obstacles and confronting resistance towards a long-term engagement of setting the stage or laying the foundation of a future Sulu," he says.

"Stimulating economic activities, creating employment, promoting peace, and paving the development path of Sulu. Building not just homes, but lives, inspiring hopes and realizing dreams," he adds.

Tips on how to be a successful overseas worker

By Elvira Mata

Book review: Work Abroad! Filipinos' Guide to Working and Succeeding Overseas

Robert John Oh, project coordinator

Published by Quantum X Inc., 2006

WHAT STARTED AS A WEBSITE providing overseas Filipino workers information on how to get a job overseas is now a book.

Its publication couldn't be more timely.

For the first time in history, more than one million documented OFWs were deployed in less than a year's time, the Department of Labor and Employment reported on its website.

From Jan. 1 to Nov. 21, 2006, a total of 1.01 million OFWs left to work in over 180 countries, representing a growth rate of 12.4 percent over the same period last year. Remittances also rose to $9.11 billion during the first nine months of the year, which is a 14.4 percent growth rate over the same period in 2005.

The numbers are great but it takes significantly greater effort to land a job overseas. Unfortunately, when it comes to job-hunting, Filipinos depend on hearsay and fate. The book will improve one's chances of becoming a successful OFW.

While it has not yet called itself a bible (the book warns that job opportunities, as well as rules on working abroad, are always changing), it is a comprehensive guidebook for Filipinos seeking work in the following fields: Medical and health care professionals namely, nurses, physical therapists and pharmacists; professional workers like engineers, teachers and information and communications technology (ICT) professionals; service workers which include hospitality workers, caregivers and domestic helpers; overseas performing artists; seafarers.

Those looking for work as president of a bank or a multinational company are not the target market of this book, although it wouldn't hurt for these lucky citizens of the world to find out what one million Filipinos go through to get a work visa.

Why a book?

Why publish a book when www.workabroad.ph has an online community of more than 100,000 registered members and 200 placement agencies?

The book's publishers are painfully aware that majority of the Philippine population does not have Internet access. This is why the book contains the most important information from their website.

For instance, it lists the top destinations and the in-demand jobs in those countries. It has articles on how to prepare a resumé, how to spot an illegal recruiter, how to apply for a Philippine passport and how to examine an employment contract.

It features inspiring success stories from OFWs and has useful country guides to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, Taiwan, Japan, Kuwait, Qatar, Singapore, Italy, United Kingdom, Australia and Spain.

Country guides contain basic information on one's destination like weather, religion, government, expected salary, job concerns, cultural taboos, address and contact numbers of the Philippine Embassy and other practical information.

For instance, in Saudi Arabia, where the biggest number of Filipinos is deployed, movie houses and music are not available in public. In Kuwait, which is the No. 3 destination for Pinoys, the official weekly holiday is Friday. In Taiwan, not everyone knows that a foreign worker is required to pay a placement fee of P10,000, a broker's fee of 1,800 Taiwan dollars (P2,952) in the first year, 1,700 Taiwan dollars (P2,700) in the second year and 1,500 Taiwan dollars (P 2,460) in the third year.

The book doubles as a survival guide dealing with homesickness, culture shock, racial discrimination and gives tips on how to save money. "Open a bank account in the Philippines before leaving" is an oft-repeated advice together with "don't spend all your salary, save, invest in real estate or start a business."

It lists government programs and services for OFWs like the Pag-Ibig overseas program, legal assistance, scholarships for dependents, etc.

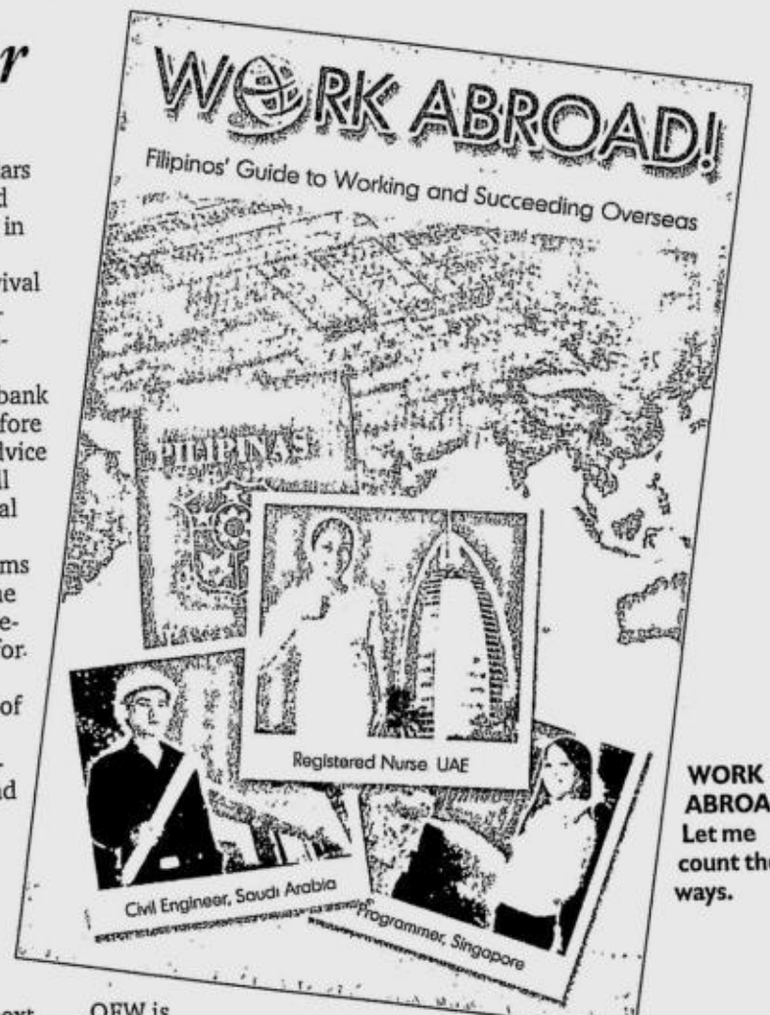
It has interesting nuggets of information like the Philippines deploys the most number of nurses in the world and it is the second largest provider of doctors.

The largest teachers' union in America, the National Education Association, has reported that the United States would need 2.4 million teachers in the next 10 years in the following areas: Science, special ed and English.

The domestic helper in Taiwan receives the highest salary at $575 while a DH in the Middle East gets the lowest pay at $200. In Taiwan, however, the OFW is subjected to a lot of fees.

The Work Abroad website claims to have helped thousands of OFWs.

The book hopes to help more Filipinos get their dream jobs.



WORK ABROAD: Let me count the ways.

"Work Abroad! Filipinos' Guide to Working and Succeeding Overseas" is available at National Bookstore, Powerbooks, Fully Booked and Office Warehouse.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Spain arrests Isabel Peron

FORMER Argentine President Maria Estela Martinez de Peron, also known as Isabel Peron, in 1988 photo. REUTERS

MADRID—SPAIN ON FRIDAY arrested former Argentine President Isabel Peron, who is wanted in her home country for questioning over the killings of leftist dissidents prior to the 1976-1983 military dictatorship.

Police arrested Peron, the widow of Argentina's former President Juan Domingo Peron, at her home in the Spanish town of Villanueva de la Canada and a judge later granted her conditional release while a decision is taken on whether or not to extradite her.

Peron succeeded her husband as president after his death but she struggled to hold onto power as political violence between leftist guerrillas and anticommunist death squads accelerated. In March 1976, she was ousted in a coup.

A day before her arrest in Spain, an Argentine judge issued an international warrant for the former leader, whose full name is Maria Estela Martinez de Peron.

Federal Judge Raul Acosta wants to question her over the 1976 disappearance of a man who rights groups say was last seen being taken into custody by state security officials.

He also accuses Peron, who was Juan Peron's third wife, of signing three decrees that facilitated acts of state terrorism during her 1974-1976 rule.

Soon after her arrest, a Spanish court granted provisional release to the 75-year-old on the condition that she appear before authorities every two weeks.

It accepted that her delicate state of health meant there was no risk she would flee, a court source said.

The source said she may be able to fight extradition because of her dual Argentine-Spanish citizenship.

Peron's arrest comes as Argentina digs deeper into its past political violence.

President Nestor Kirchner, who has pushed for deeper investigations into past human rights abuses in the South American country, said after the warrant was issued that "no one is above the law." She is under investigation for the government's alleged role in the disappearance of leftist Hector Fagetti in Mendoza province and the detention of another man.

"This had to happen. We waited 31 years and now it's starting to happen," Fagetti's wife, Elsa Sosa, told Argentine television. *Reuters*

Bush authorized Iranians' arrest in Iraq, Rice reveals

WASHINGTON—A RECENT SERIES OF US raids against Iranians in Iraq were authorized under an order that President Bush decided to issue several months ago to undertake a broad Military offensive against Iranian operatives in the country, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Friday.

"There has been a decision to go after these networks," Rice said in an interview with The New York Times in her office on Friday afternoon, before leaving on a trip to the Middle East.

Rice said Bush had acted "after a period of time in which we saw increasing activity" among Iranians in Iraq, "and increasing lethality in what they were producing." She was referring to what US Military officials say is evidence that many of the most sophisticated improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, being used against US troops were made in Iran.

Rice was vague on the question of when Bush issued the order, but said his decision grew out of questions that the president and members of his National Security Council raised in the fall.

The administration has long accused Iran of meddling in Iraq, providing weapons and training to Shiite forces with the idea of keeping the United States bogged down in the war.

Until now, despite a series of raids in which Iranians have been seized by US forces in Baghdad and other cities in Iraq, administration officials have declined to say whether Bush ordered such actions.

The White House decision to authorize the aggressive steps against Iranians in Iraq appears to formalize the US effort to contain Iran's ambitions as a new front in the Iraq war. Administration officials now describe Iran as the single greatest threat the United States faces in the Middle East, though some administration critics regard the talk about Iran as a diversion intended to shift attention away from the chaos in Iraq.

In adopting a more confrontational approach toward Iran, Bush has decisively rejected recommendations of the Iraq Study Group that he explore negotiations with Tehran as part of a new strategy to help quell the sectarian violence in Iraq. *NYT*

FORMER President Gerald R. Ford, left, lends his support to fellow Republican and presidential candidate Ronald Reagan and running mate George Bush, seen here on the final day of campaigning in Peoria, Ill., in this Nov. 3, 1980 photo. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Probe of Polish clergy scandal urged

PARIS—The Catholic Church leadership of Poland called Friday for all the country's bishops to be investigated for past ties to the secret police. "We will ask a special commission to check the past of all our bishops," the Council of Bishops' chief, Jozef Michalski, told reporters in Warsaw after the episcopate's 45 bishops conducted an emergency meeting to deal with the worst crisis in years to hit the church in Poland. It culminated last Sunday, when Warsaw's archbishop of just two days, Stanislaw Wielgus, resigned after admitting that he had collaborated with the reviled communist-era Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa, or Security Service. Newspapers digging into archives of the secret police have followed with reports that other senior clergy were once collaborators. The Rev. Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski, who has researched the subject, is about to come out with a book naming 39 priests, including three bishops, who collaborated with the secret police between 1944 and 1989. *NYT*

$368M to protect Canada border

WINDSOR, ONTARIO—Canada unveiled a major border security and prosperity initiative, saying it would spend more than C$432 million ($368 million) over the next five years to protect its border from terrorist, economic and environmental threats. Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day made the announcement on Friday at the Canada-US border crossing between Windsor and Detroit, where one-third of the C$1.9 billion ($1.6 billion) in daily trade between the North American neighbors crosses over the Ambassador Bridge or in tunnels beneath the Detroit River. "I even sometimes surprise my American friends when I remind them that the trade that comes across the Ambassador Bridge in total is greater than all of the trade that exists between the United States and Japan," Day told a news conference. Security experts have long criticized the lack of security measures along Canada's side of the 6,435-km border with the United States, particularly since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper pledged when he was elected nearly a year ago to strengthen the frontier between the world's largest trading partners, including these new security measures and eventually arming Canada's border guards. *AP*

New Bangladesh government chief

DHAKA—The head of the new interim government in Bangladesh began work Saturday to end a bitter impasse between the two main political parties that has led to canceled elections and a state of emergency. Economist Fakhruddin Ahmed, who is considered politically neutral, was sworn in at a ceremony at the presidential palace Friday, replacing embattled President Iajuddin Ahmed, who stepped aside as the caretaker chief late Thursday. The former governor of Bangladesh central bank, whose most recent job was as head of the government's microfinance department, now faces the uphill task of winning the trust of all political parties and persuading them to take part in rescheduled elections. *AFP*

DANTE

The face of Italian poet Dante Alighieri, who died some 700 years ago, appears on this combination picture from a reconstruction by scientists from the University of Bologna released Jan. 12 (right) and a fresco by Raffaello at the Vatican. The team of scientists based their work on calculations made on Dante's skull by Professor Fabio Frassetto in 1921, the only time it has been removed from its crypt. Frassetto took precise measurements and secretly made a plaster model. AFP

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

US leader Ford called Carter a 'disaster'

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN—IN 25 years of interviews with his hometown paper that could only be released upon his death, former President Gerald Ford commented on many US presidents, calling Jimmy Carter a "disaster," and saying Ronald Reagan received far too much credit for ending the Cold War.

"It makes me very irritated when Reagan's people pound their chests and say that because we had this big military buildup, the Kremlin collapsed," Ford told The Grand Rapids Press.

The best president of his lifetime, Ford said, was a more moderate Republican: Dwight D. Eisenhower, who governed America in the 1950s.

Harry Truman "would get very high marks" for his handling of foreign crises, Ford said. He also praised Richard Nixon as a foreign policy master, despite the Watergate scandal that drove him from office.

Ford considered John F. Kennedy overrated and Bill Clinton average. He admired George H.W. Bush's handling of the Persian Gulf War and had mixed opinions of Carter, who defeated Ford in 1976.

In 1981, Ford said: "I think Jimmy Carter would be very close to Warren G. Harding. I feel very strongly that Jimmy Carter was a disaster, particularly domestically and economically. I have said more than once that he was certainly the poorest president in my lifetime."

But two years later, he praised Carter's performance on the Panama Canal treaty, China and the Middle East. And in 1998, he said Carter "will be looked on as a better president than some comments we hear today."

"He was a very decent, fine individual," Ford told the paper. "There were no major mistakes. There just weren't a lot of exciting results."

Ford gave the interviews on the condition that his remarks be withheld until after his death.

According to the newspaper, Ford declined to rate George W. Bush, saying he did not know him well enough.

Ford said Reagan, who challenged him unsuccessfully for the Republican nomination in 1976, was "a great spokespman for attractive political objectives" such as a balanced budget and defeating communism, "but when it came to implementation, his record never matched his words."

Reagan was "probably the least well-informed on the details of running the government of any president I knew," Ford said. In a separate interview, he said Reagan "was just a poor manager, and you can't be president and do a good job unless you manage."

Ford contended his own negotiation of the Helsinki accords on human rights did more to win the Cold War than Reagan's military buildup. Other key factors were the Marshall Plan that helped rebuild Europe after World War II and the establishment of Nato, he said. "When you put peace, prosperity and human rights against poverty, a massive unsuccessful military program and a lack of human rights, communism was bound to collapse," he said. *AP*

2 Indon women die of bird flu

JAKARTA—TWO INDONESIAN women have died of bird flu, a health ministry official said on Saturday, taking the overall human death toll from the disease in the country to 61 amid a spike of new cases.

A 27-year-old woman from south Jakarta died after entering Persahabatan Hospital in the capital on Thursday for treatment, Muhammad Nadirin of the health ministry's bird flu information center said. She died on Friday evening. Asked whether the woman had been in contact with sick fowl, he said: "A week before she got sick, there had been dead chickens near her home."

The second death was of a 22-year-old woman from Tangerang west of Jakarta, who died in the early hours of Saturday, the official said. *Reuters*

At UN China, Russia cast rare veto against US on Burma

UNITED NATIONS—CHINA AND Russia on Friday vetoed a US resolution calling on Burma's military junta to stop persecution of minority and opposition groups, killing the measure in the UN Security Council.

The vote was 9-3 in favor of the resolution, with three abstentions. But two of the negative votes came from permanent members with veto rights.

Both Russia and China, which had not cast a double veto since 1972, made the point the United States needed to listen to their complaints carefully. They argued that human rights violations were not the purview of the Security Council unless they endangered regional or international peace and security, which Burma (also known as Myanmar) did not.

"I hope some of our partners also learned some lessons in the course of this entire process," Russia's UN ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, said. China's envoy, Wang Guangya, told reporters the United States acted like it was the only permanent council member.

South Africa also voted "no," while Qatar, Indonesia and Congo Republic abstained. Voting with Washington were Britain, which cosponsored the draft, France, Belgium, Italy, Ghana, Peru, Panama and Slovakia.

To supporters of the failed resolution, pressure from the United Nations and elsewhere has had little effect on the junta, which cooperated a bit more with the world body only after the Security Council put Burma on its agenda.

The measure urged Burma to release all political prisoners, move toward democracy and stop attacks against minorities, many of whom are used for forced labor.

"The people of Burma should not feel disheartened by this.

This was an effort to bring the situation to the attention of the world community and to send a clear signal that we have not forgotten you. And we won't forget you," Acting US Ambassador Alejandro Wolff told the council.

He argued that refugees were pouring over the border, the trafficking of people had increased and AIDS was spreading.

Burma's UN ambassador, Kyaw Tint Swe, said cooperating with the United Nations was the cornerstone of Burma's foreign policy.

Ibrahim Gambari, head of UN political affairs, visited Burma twice last year and met with Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest or in prison since her National League for Democracy won elections in 1990. *Reuters*

12th ASEAN SUMMIT
CEBU, PHILIPPINES
10 - 15 January 2007

One Caring and Sharing Community

Philippines 2007---A strong nation fighting poverty through Filipino excellence and global engagement.

ASEAN 2007---neighbors working for a better world, embracing hope, sharing dreams.

Caring for our God-given natural environment and the protection and welfare of migrant workers.

Sharing energy independence and the collective will to banish corruption, crime and terror.

Caring and Sharing for Peace through interfaith dialogue and cultural understanding.

President Arroyo formally opening the 39th ASEAN anniversary celebration in Malacañang on August 8, 2006 (Top).

With Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo

Key Concerns that President Arroyo will champion in the 12th ASEAN Summit

The key concerns that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will champion during the 12th ASEAN Summit and other top-level meetings are near and dear to her vision for the Filipino people. The first priority is a focus on social justice, including care for our God-given natural environment and the protection and welfare of our children. That is why the President has chosen the theme of "One Caring and Sharing Community" for the Summit. The second is the value of closer regional economic cooperation and integration to expand the country's markets, increase investments and create jobs here at home. This includes a need to care for our overseas workers, create energy independence and self-reliance, and to wipe out the corrosive affects of corruption. Finally, the President is focused on bringing together all nations to fight terrorism, provide for protection of our homeland and bring peace to Mindanao and other trouble spots in the region. ●

Benefits to RP of GMA leadership in ASEAN

The leadership of President Arroyo in ASEAN and other international forums has directly benefited the people of the Philippines. Through her hard work in the international community, the President has generated investments and jobs, strengthened our security in the fight against terrorism, and improved social justice. The President is bringing those benefits home. The upcoming Leaders' Summits are a direct reflection of the benefits of the President's engagement and the honor and prestige she is bringing to the people of the Philippines through the presence of world leaders in Cebu City. The President is constantly working for a new, more modern Philippines and to eliminate poverty and improve the quality of life of every Filipino. And key to our future success as a nation is our ability to prepare our people to compete and win at home and abroad. To prepare our nation, the President believes that our youths must have every opportunity available to them to succeed. Engagement with other countries introduces all our people, particularly our youths, to the opportunities that the world holds in store for them. The President wants to make sure that our young people must be exposed to the workings of the Summits and the importance of producing new leaders who will guide our great nation in the future. ●

The Philippines in ASEAN

Since its founding 39 years ago, ASEAN has promoted peace and stability in the region and enhanced sustainable growth among its member countries. Over the years, the Philippines and the Filipino people have benefited from these ASEAN objectives. Because of improved regional stability, there has been increased investment and tourism flows between the Philippines and its neighbors in the region, and even beyond. On promoting stability, ASEAN supports the Philippines on vital national security questions, notably in the territorial dispute in the South China Sea. ASEAN has been mainly responsible for the emergence of a modus vivendi in the important sea lane among the claimant countries. Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam have also extended crucial assistance for the peace process in Mindanao. They have facilitated peace talks and ceasefires and have provided diplomatic backing for the Philippines in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). ASEAN has matured from a mere economic grouping to a key regional organization that has touched the lives of the people in the region, assuring them safety and improving their quality of life. The Philippines has played a key role in ongoing projects of ASEAN that include cooperative projects in the areas of HIV/AIDS, community-based care for the elderly, occupational safety and health; sustainable employment, youth cultural forum, media exchanges, ASEAN university network, social welfare, family and population, and bird flu and SARS management. The Philippines also actively participated,and even initiated, cooperative efforts in the fight against terrorism, energy sharing, tourism promotion, human resource development, poverty eradication and protection of migrant workers. ●

6 Dialogue Partners

Prime Minister John Howard
Australia

Premier Wen Jiabao
China

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
India

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
Japan

President Roh-Moo-Hyun
Republic of Korea

Prime Minister Helen Clark
New Zealand

Cebu City

The City of Cebu is the provincial capital of Cebu in the Philippines and is the second most imortant metropolitan center in the country. The City lies on the eastern shore of the island of Cebu and is the oldest City in the country. It is the country's main domestic shipping hub and is home to more than 80% of the country's interisland shipping companies. Cebu is also the main hub, outside of the capital, of international flights into the country and is the most important center of commerce, trade, and industry in the Visayas and Mindanao, the southern parts of the country. It is because of this and other important aspects that Cebu City is dubbed the Queen City of the South. According to the official 2000 census, it has a population of 718, 821 people in 147, 600 households.

Cebu City is the center of a metropolitan area called Metro Cebu, which includes the cities of Mandaue, Lapu-Lapu, and Talisay. Metro Cebu has a total population of more than 2 million people. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport, located in Lapu-Lapu City. To the northeast of the city are Mandaue, the town of Consolacion, to the west are Toledo City and the town of Minglanilla. Across Mactan Strait to the east is Mactan Island where Lapu-Lapu City is located.

The venues for the Leaders' Meeting and Retreat of the 12th ASEAN Summit and other related Summits are the Mactan Hall of the Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa (bottom left) and the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City (bottom right).

Leaders Attending 12th ASEAN Summit

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah
Brunei Darussalam

Capital : Bandar Seri Begawan
Land area : 5,765 sq.km
Population : 370,100 (2005)
Language : Malay, English
Religion : Islam
Currency : B$ (Brunelan Dollar).
GDP : US$ 6.3 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen
Cambodia

Head of State : His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni
Capital : Phnom Penh
Land area : 181,035 sq.km
Population : 13.7 million (2005)
Language : Khmer
Religion : Buddhism
Currency : Riel
GDP : US$ 5.5 billion (2005)

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
Indonesia

Capital : Jakarta
Land area : 1,890,000 sq.km.
Population : 220.0 million (2005)
Language : Bahasa Indonesia
Religion : Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism
Currency : Rupiah
GDP : US$ 280.3 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh
Lao PDR

Head of State : President Choummaly Sayasone
Capital : Vientiane
Land area : 236,800 sq.km
Population : 6.0 million (2005)
Language : Lao
Religion : Buddhism
Currency : Kip
GDP : US$ 3.7 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi
Malaysia

Head of State : DYMM Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Dipertuan Agung Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Ibni Almarhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail
Capital : Kuala Lumpur
Land area : 330,257 sq.km
Population : 26.1 million (2005)
Language : Melayu, English, Chinese, Tamil
Religion : Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Christianity
Currency : Malaysian Ringgit
GDP : US$ 130.7 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Gen. Soe Win
Myanmar

Head of State : Senior General Than Shwe
Capital : Yangon
Land area : 676,577 sq.km
Population : 56.0 million (2005)
Language : Myanmar
Religion : Buddhism, Christianity, Islam
Currency : Myanmar Kyat
GDP : US$ 5.9 billion (2005) at current market prices

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
Philippines

Capital : Manila
Land area : 300,000 sq. km.
Population : 84.2 million (2005)
Language : Filipino, English
Religion : Christianity (Catholicism, Protestantism, Philippine Independent Church , Iglesia ni Kristo); Islam
Currency : Peso
GDP : US$97.7 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong
Singapore

Head of State : President S R Nathan
Capital : Singapore
Land area : 697.1 sq.km
Population : 4.4 million (2005)
Language : English, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil
Religion : Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Hinduism
Currency : Singapore Dollar (S$)
GDP : US$116.7 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont
Thailand

Head of State : His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej
Capital : Bangkok
Land area : 513,254 sq.km
Population : 64.8 million (2005)
Language : Thai
Religion : Buddhism, Islam
Currency : Baht
GDP : US$ 176.6 billion (2005)

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung
Vietnam

Head of State : President Nguyen Minh Triet
Capital : Ha Noi
Land area : 330,363 sq.km
Population : 83.1 million (2005)
Language : Vietnamese
Religion : Buddhism, Christianity
Currency : Dong
GDP : US$ 52.8 billion (2005)

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Pinoy** booters fight for life/A25

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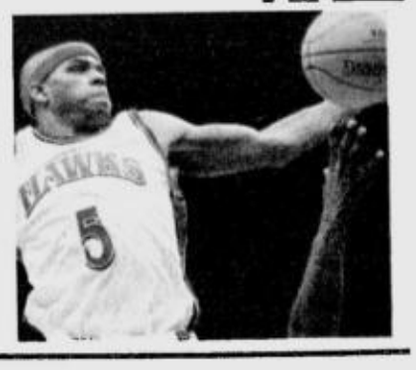
Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

■ **Dirk** powers Mavs/A26



NM, WNM deny raps of fixing matches

NATIONAL MASTERS MIRABEAU MAGA AND Alex Milagrosa, as well as the family of WNM Christy Lamiel Bernales yesterday denied their involvement in the group of chess players the National Chess Federation of the Philippines is investigating for game-fixing.

It shall be recalled that exactly a week ago, NCFP president Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. revealed that the NCFP is investigating several players for their alleged involvement in the scam dubbed as networking.

"I was never part of game-fixing or networking," said Maga, a three-time Olympian and champion of the 2006 Cordillera Open Chess in Baguio City, in Filipino.

Maga, one of the best chess trainers in the country, is an active proponent of the RP Chess Caravan, which was held yesterday in Caloocan City led by NCFP director and RP six-time executive champion dentist Jenny Mayor.

Jomar Bernales also denied that his 12-year-old daughter Lamiel is involved in the network.

"The game they say was fixed happened only because Alex (Milagrosa, Lamiel's opponent) defaulted his match because he was apparently facilitating his passport," said Bernales in Filipino, referring to the free win his daughter got in the National Championships.

Winner

"In that game against Din (Ballecer), my daughter was really a winner," Bernales told the INQUIRER. "How can a minor be involved in game-fixing? If that happens then the NCFP should investigate me."

Milagrosa backed Bernales' claim.

"I was really working on my passport to join the Singapore Open," he said in Filipino. "In fact, I wanted to withdraw from the tournament but I wasn't able to let the organizers know in time."

Meanwhile, NCFP chair lawyer Matias Defensor gave his statement on the ongoing chess mess yesterday.

"When I was the president of the NCFP, I had already heard of game fixing in chess but they were isolated cases," he said. "Unlike now when the cheating has become so blatant and sophisticated that the syndicate can predetermine the outcome of a tournament. During my time, we investigated an NM and a leading lady player for game fixing. The ongoing investigation is a correct move of the NCFP board."

Revelation

It was just three days ago when NCFP executive director lawyer Samuel Estimo revealed the names of those implicated in game-fixing: International Masters Ronald Dableo and Darwin Laylo in the Tanauan City Open last year.

Estimo said they have strong evidence to buttress allegations that Dableo and Laylo intentionally dropped their game against eventual winner IM Chito Garma. Estimo also linked GM Mark Paragua in the networking scam, although he admitted that the evidence against the country's highest-ranked player is not that strong.

Dableo, Laylo and Paragua, all members of Team Philippines to last year's Chess Olympiad in Turin, Italy, are currently playing in the 2007 3.3 Asian Zonals in Vietnam. Bernales, who saw action in the 2004 World Youth Chess Championships, is also entered in the women's division.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Sparks halt Comets' run; Harbour Centre prevails

ALFIE Grijaldo of TeleTech soars for a hook against Harbour Centre defenders in their game yesterday. Grijaldo and the Titans, however, came up short against the Port Masters. LYN RILLON

By Jasmine W. Payo

GAMES TUESDAY (*Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym*)
2 p.m.—Henkel Sista vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs TeleTech

TOYOTA OTIS FIGURED OUT THE FORMULA to subdue Mail and More's seemingly unstoppable form in the PBL Silver Cup.

Banking on two hot shooters and a mid-game defensive adjustment, Toyota Otis frustrated Mail and More's bid for an outright semifinal berth with an 81-71 triumph yesterday at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

With the win, the Sparks snapped the comets' six-game run—the longest winning streak this conference. But the meat in the feat was that it put the Sparks in contention for an outright semifinal berth with a 6-3 record.

Continuing his recent strong performances, Patrick Cabahug poured in a game-high 25 points to lead the Sparks to their third straight win. Jonathan Aldave also caught fire in the second half to finish with 19 markers.

"I attribute it to our transition defense in the third quarter," said Sparks coach Louie Alas. "We made very little adjustments. In the first half we used a full court [press], then in the second half we met them mid-court."

Despite missing the chance to claim the first semifinal seat outright, the Comets closed out their elimination campaign with a 7-3 card—enough for at least a playoff berth for a final four ticket.

Aside from Toyota Otis, Henkel Sista (6-3) and Hapee-PCU (6-3) also are in contention for the incentive given to the top two teams at the end of the classification phase.

Harbour Centre also stayed in the running after a 93-83 double overtime victory over TeleTech in the second game upped its slate to 6-3.

JC Intal shot nine points in the last five minutes to finish with a game-high 27 markers.

"At least we still have a chance in the semis; this is (Intal's) breakout game," said coach Jorge Gallent after a fourth straight win.

Kim Valenzuela bailed out the Titans with a triple in the last 5.7 seconds of regulation to forge overtime at 61.

The Titans forced another extra period when Al Magpayo nailed a three-pointer with 6.6 seconds left for a 75-75 deadlock.

Cabahug, who came off an 18-point performance versus Sista, set the tone in bringing down the league's hottest team.

The streaky guard shot 15 points in the opening minutes to lead the Sparks to a 38-27 advantage early in the second period.

And it looked like that the pressure got the better of the league-leading Comets.

From a 46-40 halftime edge, the Sparks zoomed to a 58-44 lead as the Comets started the second half with several miscues and turnovers.

The scores:

First Game

TOYOTA OTIS 81—Cabahug 25, Aldave 19, Coronel 8, Daa 7, Jaime 5, Cruz 5, Dedicatoria 3, Jazul 3, Yabut 2, Rodriguez 2, Fajardo 2, Quinday 0.

MAIL AND MORE 71—Buenafe 10, Te 9, Espiritu 9, Pribhdas 8, Viray 7, Quinahan 7, Canizares 5, Bravo 5, Coyukang 5, David 4, Yambao 2, Aquino 0, Del Rosario 0.

Quarters: 27-20, 46-40, 63-50, 81-71

Second Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 93—Intal 27, Lanete 19, Arana 11, Alonzo 10, Capati 9, Juntilla 6, Vergara 5, Gamboa 2, Raymundo 2, Fernandez 2, Coching 0, Ortiguerra 0, Gaco 0.

TELETECH 83—Magpayo 26, Valenzuela 19, Villamin 14, Latoreno 7, Grijaldo 4, Doruelo 3, Guerrero 3, Labagala 2, Concha 2, Capus 2, Tan 1, Estrada 0, Mercado 0.

Quarters: 22-10, 26-31, 41-38, 61-61 (reg), 75-75 (10T), 93-83 (20T)

PSC says grassroots sports stay

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISsion vowed not to neglect the development of athletes on the grassroots level even if focus is on elite sports.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez yesterday said the government agency would not take grassroots programs for granted, stressing that it would play a crucial role on the search for medal potentials in the Olympics.

And, according to the former Team Philippines chef de mission in the Doha Asian Games and 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games, it could be done by collaborating closely with local government units.

RAMIREZ

"We cannot augment the capacity of the grassroots programs without the help of the LGUs," said Ramirez. "Collaborating with the LGUs could help the PSC and the POC (Philippine Olympic Committee) discover talents in the countryside."

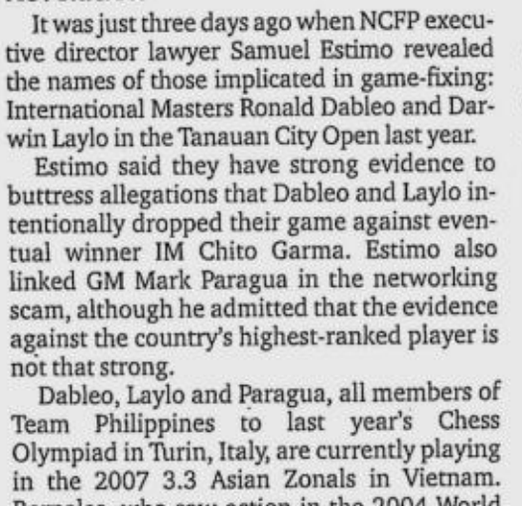
The PSC and the POC have been setting up a long-term program aimed at capturing the country's first-ever gold medal in the Olympics.

So far, 14 sports are identified as medal potentials in the 2008 Beijing Olympiad. Around 30 athletes from these disciplines would be chosen to train overseas for the gold-medal quest.

The POC will kick off its talent identification program next month with the Philippine Olympic Festival, a five-leg regional multi-event tournament that will culminate in a national championships at the end of the year.

"The idea is to discover talents on a wider reach and develop them so that the current crop of national athletes will have somebody whom they could pass the baton on," said Ramirez.

PVF to spike up beach volleyball



PASCUA (foreground) and Ilustre. PDI PHOTO

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A COUNTRY KNOWN FOR THE POWDERsand beaches that cut across its coastlines and an almost year-round tropical climate should have no trouble finding a venue to push beach volleyball's popularity.

But the Philippine Volleyball Federation is eyeing a natural resource of the breathing kind: Talented young players who can form a deep pool.

PVF secretary general Otie Camangian said development of beach volleyball will be one of their priorities this year after the sport reached new heights over the past two years.

"It is easy to organize and desn't cost too much because you only have two players," said Camangian. "But more than that, we have big potential of winning internationally."

The Philippines' beach belles hope to get a piece of the Olympic action as they attempt to join several legs in the World Tour.

Camangian said there are 18 legs in the Tour and some of these will be the qualifying for the Beijing Games next year. He said they already have verbal commitment from the Philippine Sports Commission to finance the trips.

By 2008, PVF hopes to host one leg of the Asian beach volleyball circuit with a hope of getting more private support.

The country's beach volley tandem of Heidi Ilustre and Diane Pascua breathed life in the sport when they snared the bronze medal during the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

The Fil-American duo also reached the quarterfinal of the tough Doha Asian Games late last year, while the men's team landed 13th of 26 competitors.

Right now, Camangian said, Ilustre and Pascua are competing in New Zealand on their own expense as they still look for private sector to bankroll their campaigns overseas.

Barako battle tired Realtors today

By Musong R. Castillo

GAMES TODAY Today (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:05 p.m.—Purefoods vs Talk 'N Text
6:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Red Bull

OF ALL THE TEAMS IN THE Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup quarterfinals, it seems that Sta. Lucia is the only one coming into the round with a disadvantage.

Coming off four tough games in an eight-day stretch and injuries hounding key men, the Realtors clash with a well-rested Red Bull side at the start of their series tonight, with Barako coach Yeng Guiao knowing full well how to attack his foes.

"Talent-wise, I think it's fairly even," Guiao told the Inquirer over the phone yesterday. "But they (Realtors) will be coming off a gruelling schedule and a best-of-five series can end in a snap.

"And some injuries (to their players) make it a huge advantage for us," he added. "I think, in the end, fresher legs will prevail."

Gametime is 6:35 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, and Guiao did not hide his excitement in playing for the first time in three weeks.

"Naiinip na nga ang mga bata, eh," (The players are getting restless) Guiao said.

Meanwhile, Purefoods and Talk 'N Text open up their separate series at 4:05 p.m. with defending champion Chunkee Giants' coach Ryan Gregorio labelling the series "Height vs Speed."

"We are the smallest team playing the biggest team," Gregorio said over the phone. "But honestly, I am excited because of the challenge of having to play such a huge team.

"This series will be won on the ground and not up there," he added. "We will come up with a lot of surprises because we're ready to compete though we're small and we have the championship experience."

Both series are race-to-three affairs with the winner of the Red Bull-Sta. Lucia match-up advancing to clash with San Miguel and the victor of the Purefoods-TNT pairing meeting Barangay Ginebra in best-of-seven semifinal series.

Guiao also admitted to being impressed with Kelly Williams, but believes that the 6-foot-7 Fil-American, being a rookie, still does not have the consistency that would spell the difference for the Realtors in the series.

"His (Williams) brilliance is not yet consistent," Guiao said. "Like last (Friday) night, they played him for 48 minutes (in a 121-118 overtime victory over the Express), and it could be an overuse of Kelly.

"Plus, we intend to make him play defense," Guiao added.

Skipper Dennis Espino is playing way below percent, Marlou Aquino strained his knee after a great night and Kenneth Duremdes, the 1996 Most Valuable Player, dislocated his left pinky in what could ultimately go down as a "costly" victory over Air21.

KELLY Williams: Impressive

Shanine shocks Lim, carries on family tradition

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE LONG LINE OF TENNIS CHAMPIONS runs through Shanine Olivarez's veins.

She left no doubt about it yesterday after pulling the rug from under top-seeded Sarah Jane Lim, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, to barge into the girls 16-under finals of the 18th Andrada Cup age-group championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The youngest daughter of former Philippine Lawn Tennis Association chief and former Paranaque mayor Pablo Olivarez, and sister to Southeast Asian Games champ Eva, Shanine shocked everybody with her steely nerves to turn back the tournament favorite.

Shanine will fight for the title against fifth-seeded Maria Regina Santiago, who bundled out second seed Martina Guba, 6-3, 2-0, after Guba suffered blisters on her feet.

The 13-year-old Olivarez, studying at the Brent International School, had earlier made the 14-under finals after a 6-3, 6-3 triumph over No. 8 Tamitha Nguyen. She will face Guba in that category after a 6-3, 6-2 semifinal win over fourth seed Jasmine Tan Ho.

"I'm happy to be in the finals and I hope to do my best to win," said the youngster who came to the tournament unseeded.

Fourth seed Crizzabelle Paulino of Olongapo City stunned top seed Akiko de Guzman, 6-4, 6-2, to advance in the 12-under finals against unseeded Marian Jade Capadocia of Kalibo, Aklan.

Capadocia prevailed over Cristabelle Paulino, 6-2, 6-0.

Santiago also made it to the 18-under division final after besting Mary Grace Rivero, 6-1, 6-1. She will face the winner of the other semifinal between top seed Trudy Amoranto and unseeded Sarah Jane Lim.

Santiago, 16, carries more experience over Olivarez, but the younger netter is expected to flash the courage under fire that enabled her to overhaul the first-set setback against the top seed yesterday.

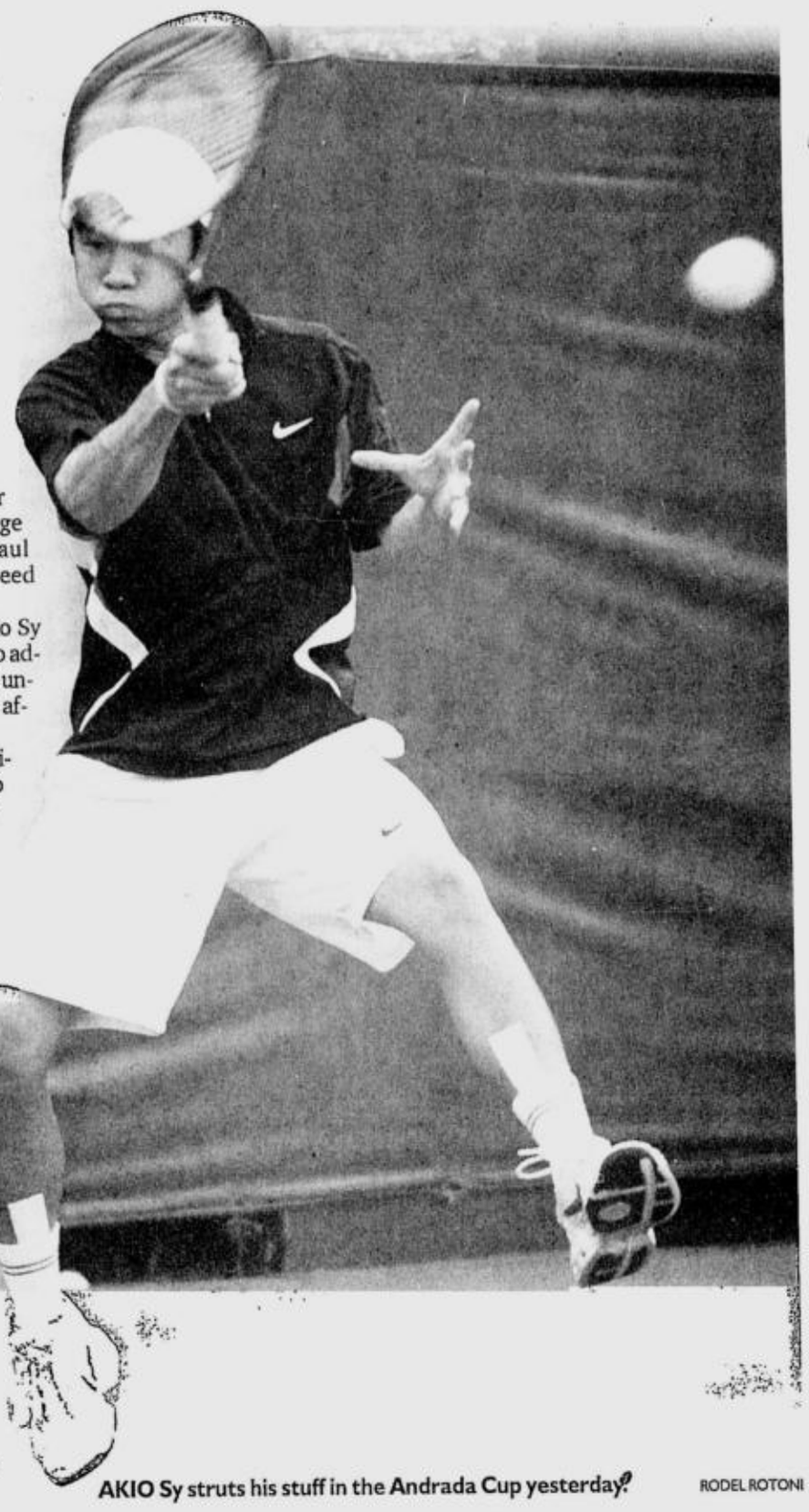
In the boy's division, fourth seed Akio Sy routed No. 6 Marlo Espedido, 6-1, 6-3, to advance to the 18-under finals against unseeded John Francis Largo, who made it after two walkovers.

Third seed Kim Ivor Saraza eliminated top seed Akio Sy, 6-4, 6-4, to reach the boys' 16-under category earning a shot at the title against No. 8 Jose Lorenzo Ferrer, who won over second seed Juan Fidel Regis, 6-3, 6-2.

In the boys' 14-under division, second seed Leander Lazaro trounced fourth seed Dheo Talatayod, 6-1, 6-4, to arrange a title duel with Kyle Cordero, who walked over third seed Alberto Villamor.

Boys' 12-under top seed Jacob Lagman of Cebu City beat third seed Juan Alfonso Opulencia, 6-1, 6-2, to forge a title duel against unseeded Jurence Mendoza, who won by default over Vince Salas.

In the unisex 10-under division, third seed Vince Mark Tabotabo of Cebu ripped top seed Vince Salas, 6-0, 6-3, to make the championship match. He will take on second seed Eric Iivarez Jr., who scored a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Isabela Orteza.


AKIO Sy struts his stuff in the Andrada Cup yesterday. RODEL ROTONI

So, Nouri, Torre up in Zonals

PHU QUOC, KIEN GIANG, VIETNAM–TEEN sensation Wesley So, rising star Hamed Nouri and veteran Eugene Torre held sway for Team Philippines after three rounds of the Asian Zone 3.3 chess championships here.

Nouri, the highest-placed Filipino in the recent PGMA Chess Challenge held at the Duty Free Mall last November, provided the biggest surprise when he stunned third seed GM Dao Thien Hai of Vietnam in the second round and then drew with ninth seed IM Bui Vinh of Vietnam to share the lead with the 13-year-old So, Torre and four Vietnamese.

Nouri shocked Dao (Elo 2559) after only 30 moves of the Colle system to match the 2.5 points of So, the country's youngest national champion ever, and the 55-year-old Torre.

Equally impressive was So, who stunned top seed GM Mark Paragua in 38 moves of the Sicilian in the second round and drew with No. 8 seed GM Le Quang Liem of Vietnam in the third round.

It was the second time in three meetings that So bested Paragua following an earlier triumph during the GMA chessfest .

Torre, the most senior in the 11-man RP delegation, racked up back-to-back victories over No. 24 FM Ton That Nhu Tung of Vietnam in the second round and No 10 IM Oliver Dimakiling in the third round.

Joining the three Filipino players in the early lead were No. 7 seed Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, No. 8 Le Quang Liem, No. 9 Bui Vinh and No. 12 Gm Tu Hoang Thong.

Paragua bounced back from the second-round setback to subdue No. 25 FM Pham Chuong of Vietnam and lead three other Filipinos, second seed GM Wynn Zaw Htun of Myanmar and four Vietnamese in eighth to 16 th places with two points in three rounds.

With Paragua and Htun were GM Nelson Mariano, IM Darwin Laylo and NM Oliver Barbosa and Vietnamese Nguyen, Anh Dung, Vho Thanh Nihn, Hoang Cahn Huan and Nguyen Huy.

Mariano drew with Htun in the second round and Nguyen in the third round; Laylo halved the point with Ravindran Shanmugam of Singapore and won over Ngo Ngoc Quang of Vietnam; and Barbosa bowed to GM Le Quang Liem but owti over Shanmugam.

GM Rogelio Antonio Jr., the country's second highest-rated player with an Elo of 2551, settled for two more draws against Nguyen Thien Viet and Tran Thanh Tu to remain in a tie for 17th to 28th places with only 1.5 points.

Also with 1.5 points were Dimakiling, Asian Games bet IM Ronald Dableo and NM Julius de Ramos.

NM Marlon Bernardino

Bobby Parks' Filipino son also rises

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

I GOT TWO INTERESTING LETTERS in my e-mail yesterday, one from San Francisco-based player agent Bobby Rius, the other from Henry Abes, president and CEO of gameface.ph, a website aiming to build a reputation as the bible of Philippine amateur basketball.

***

Until I got this letter from Bobby, I did not realize that the son of Bobby Parks and Filipino wife Shane is now all grownup and has taken after his father in terms of basketball skills. Rius failed to state his exact age but I figure he must be 14 or 15 years old now.

"Before it leaks out, I just want to let you know about Rey Parks, son of Bobby whose mother is Shane from Manila. An outstanding varsity cager, Rey was featured in the Memphis Television Newswatch, which is definitely big-time. He is the top Grade 8 player in Memphis and was voted MVP," wrote Bobby who left a lot of blanks for me to fill out, such as the name of Rey's school and the league where he plays.

At least he remembered to give the Fil-Am cager's height: 6-foot-3 and still growing.

To continue: "Rey will apply to study at the Ateneo University which, I'm sure, will dominate the UAAP Juniors. I gave a DVD of his game to Arben Santos, manager of Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva and all the other Ateneo players now in the PBA and this will be presented to Ateneo sports director Ricky Palou for evaluation."

"Rey is for real. Based on the DVD, I could tell that he is definitely PBA all-star material with NBA potential. He even spoke Tagalog when he was interviewed on TV."

Bobby promised to send some articles about Rey, son of 7-time (or is it 8?) PBA Best Import awardee Bobby Parks.

***

Every year, gameface.ph comes out with its Hardcore Mythical team and Hardcore Player of the Year, culled from the premiere amateur leagues in the country such as the UAAP, NCAA, PBL, and others. The E-mail from Henry Abes contained the names of the 2006 awardees and the reason why their were chosen. (*Ed's note: The following capsules were edited for style and space constraints*)

The Mythical Five:

GUARD—Macky Escalona, Ateneo, 5'8" 145 pounds. In Season 69 of the UAAP basketball tournament Escalona surprised opponents and fans in general with his improved jumpshot, playmaking and leadership to finally emerge from the shadows of LA Tenorio. In the PBL he is leads the field in assists (6.57 apg) and steals (2.57 spg) while playing on a star-studded Cebuana-Lhuillier team.

> 'I could tell that he is definitely PBA all-star material with NBA potential. He even spoke Tagalog when he was interviewed on TV.'

GUARD—Jason Castro, Philippine Christian University, 5'9" 140 pounds. Castro has been nothing short of a revelation in Season 82 of the NCAA basketball tournament as well as the ongoing PBL Silver Cup. After nearly delivering the NCAA cage diadem to PCU, he continues to shine as the engine driving the Hapee-PCU team in the PBL. Castro led Hapee-PCU to a six-game winning streak in the ongoing PBL Silver Cup and continues to make his teammates better.

Honorable Mentions: Bon Bon Custodio, Jojo Duncil, Pong Escobal, Jonas Villanueva

FORWARD—Allan Evangelista, University of Santo Tomas, 6'3" 190 pounds. Say what you will about Allan Evangelista—unassuming, boring, unspectacular. But in Santo Tomas' improbable march to the UAAP Season 69 men's basketball crown, Evangelista nailed tough shots, made clutch plays and hustled his butt off. From being a player who merely backed up Santo Tomas superstars like Christian Luanzon, Warren De Guzman and even Jemal Vizcara, Allan Evangelista has become a superstar, and has something those guys do not: a UAAP championship.

FORWARD—Floyd Dedicatoria, Jose Rizal University, 6'4" 185 pounds. First he made the NCAA Season 82 Mythical 5 while leading JRU to a near-Final 4 berth. Along the way he also averaged career highs in scoring and rebounding, averaging a double-double. Then in the recent Homegrown Cup he led JRU all the way to the Finals where his Heavy Bombers gave a mighty De La Salle squad all it could handle.

Honorable Mentions: Yousif Al Jammal, JC Intal, Doug Kramer, Anthony Espiritu

CENTER—Sam Ekwe, San Beda College, 6'8" 235 pounds. Sam Ekwe is pursuing studies to join the Holy Orders. Of course like any good student he wants to get some extracurricular activities in, hence basketball. In Season 82 of the NCAA, Ekwe led the San Beda Red Lions to their first title in 28 years as he led the league in rebounds and blocks. He was named Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year, duplicating the feat of Gabby Espinas. In the ongoing PBL Silver Cup he is second overall in the Player Efficiency Ratings, coming in second overall in field goal shooting, rebounds and blocks. Not bad for a guy who could barely catch an entry pass about a year back.

Honorable Mentions: Ken Bono, Jervy Cruz, Gabby Espinas

PLAYER OF THE YEAR—Sam Ekwe. To have come so far in such a relatively short time in the modern game of basketball is nothing to sneeze at. There have been many big men in the country who did not create the impact Ekwe is making now. There are players nearly Ekwe's size, and sometimes even bigger, who cannot get a rebound unless it fell in their laps. It is a testament to the coaching Ekwe has gotten that he has learned so much so soon. But it is an even bigger testament to his personal work ethic and determination that he has gotten this far.

Honorable Mentions: Jason Castro, Floyd Dedicatoria

Sinulog Open starts Jan. 17

A TIGHT TITLE FIGHT LOOMS WHEN THE National Chess Federation of the Philippines holds the Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr.-Sinulog Open chess championships on Jan. 17-20 at the Aznar Coliseum in Cebu City.

Sans the country's leading players who are competing in the Asian Zonals in Vietnam, there are no clear favorites for the P50,000 top purse plus a finely crafted trophy.

"The NCFP is very happy to hold this tournament in Cebu as part of the annual Sinulog celebrations," said Rep. Pichay, who is expected to grace the opening f the tournament.

"The battle for top honors will be a wide open race this time in the absence of the country's leading players," said tournament director Cesar Caturla.

The runner-up will receive P30,000, the third placer P20,000 and the fourth placer P10,000. The fifth to 10th placers will receive P5,000 each, while the 11th to 20th placers will get P3,000 each.

The top three female players and top three kiddie players will earn P3,000, P2,000 and P1,000, respectively.

A total cash prize of P200,000 is at stake in the event being jointly promoted by the NCFP and Rose Pharmacy of businessman-sportsman Boojie lim.

For inquiries, call/text Caturla at 0928-7132397 or Marvin Ruelan at 0916-4232335.

NM Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Nat'l Pro-Am reset to pave way for Open

THE KONICA MINOLTA NATIONAL PRO-AM Golf Championship has been moved to Feb. 7-10, organizers announced yesterday.

This was done in lieu of the Philippine Open, whose sudden staging on Feb. 1-4 interfered with the original schedule of the Konica Minolta Pro-Am on Jan. 31-Feb. 3.

"In the spirit of sportsmanship, we are moving our tournament in deference to the Philippine Open," said Edilberto B. Bravo, the U-Bix top honcho who is chair of the executive committee of the Konica Minolta Pro-Am. "I thank our partners in the Pro-Am from Japan for their graciousness and understanding as they acceded to our request to postpone our event."

Bravo also said he fully understood the nuances of the Philippine Open, which is now being run by the Asian Tour in agreement with the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

The Celebrity Tournament of the Konica Minolta Pro-Am has also been moved from Jan. 30 to Feb. 6, with Toyota Motor Philippines donating an Avanza, Toyota's newest model, as a hole-in-one prize through TMP's first vice president Daniel M. Isla.

The new-generation Altis will also be staked as a hole-in-prize in the P1.7-M event.

"Attorney Bravo made many people happy with his gesture," said Comm. Danny Pizarro (ret.), chair of the organizing committee.

Alice Andrada, the NGAP treasurer, also-postponed her Southern Ladies event from Feb. 7-9 to March 21-24 in Iloilo's Sta. Barbara Club.

Gerard Cantada has confirmed that JR Tanpinco, his amateur partner in winning the last three editions of the event, has taken a leave of absence from his schooling in the US to defend their crown at The Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

For details, call 525-6987 and 524-5160 (NGAP) and (046) 414-2868 (The Riviera).

ANDY ALVAREZ

FILIPINO Emelio Caligdong tries to dribble his way out of trouble against the Malaysian defense Thursday night.

Olympic scouting in place

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THERE WILL BE ONE VITAL COMPONENT IN the country's quest for its first Olympic gold medal: A video recorder.

Each of the team going through the Olympic training program will have a designated videographer whose main task is to dog all possible opponents who could get in the way of the Filipino Olympic dream.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Ramirez bared the extensive scouting plans in order to make it as "scientific and efficient" as possible.

"It's not enough that we know the capability of the Filipino athlete," according to Ramirez, "we also have to know what our opponents are capable of doing."

That's what the arrangement will be once the national teams are scattered around the world for training and competitions.

"For example, who among the Koreans is the strongest possible contender for the taekwondo gold?," added Ramirez. "We will take pains to follow his training, understand his fighting techniques and hopefully discover his weaknesses."

That same set-up will be followed in 11 other disciplines like boxing, archery, track and field, swimming, diving, gymnastics, weightlifting, lawn tennis, shooting, fencing and wushu, a special event in the Beijing Olympics.

The Olympic training program, to be bankrolled by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, will hire a team to document each training camp and competition the Olympic-bound athletes will take part in.

From March until the 2008 Games, their findings will be used to chart the course the Philippines is going to take in its drive toward the Olympic gold.

RACING

By Top Choice

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Kawiliwili (3), El Cid (1), My Little Africa (4), Pulilan Beauty (7)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Italia (3), Visionary (6), Prince Ferdie/Cats On Fire (8), Color My World (9), Knows West (2)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Jajie (5), Kalashnikov (6), Royal Rose (1), Air Power (2)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Clear Stone (2), Parrot Moe (6), Queen Josephine (9), Mas Que Nada (4), Spinning Bullet (3)
Race 5—(Tri)—Pride And Joy/Lirao (5), Don't Tell Ella (3), Kalmia (4)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Without Warning (2), Pirouette (7), Head Turner (4), Graceful Conqueror (5)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Last Hazm/Miss Fantastic (5), Imminent Star (6), Don Paolo (4), Iron Heart (1)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Ferrarlone (9), Friendly Fire (12), Bundok Peninsula (13), Friendly Venture (2), El Love Señora (10)
Race 9—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Brown Bomber/Royal Halo (1), Queen Esther (5), Gold Seeker (3), Regal Chief (8), Don Peri Gold (2)
Race 10—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Lightning Strike (3), Joint Account/Money Man (4), Erica's Talent (1), Tiger Rally (13), Be My Pride (12)
Race 11—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Prince Valiant (7), Stradivarius (2), Revelation (3), Slow Dancer (5), American Idol (1)
Race 12—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Papillon/Seven Lakes (7), Fine Offer, Lovely Tara (1), Hurry Prince (4), Morning Nell (2)
Race 13—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Dato's Pride (6), Joker (8), Sweet Talk (4), Karma (5), Manila's Smile (9), Golden Song (1)

Pinoy booters fight for life

BANGKOK—THE PHILIPPINES' FORtunes in the Asean Football Championships seem to turn for the worse by the day here.

Still reeling from a 4-0 thrashing at the hands of Malaysia, the Philippines suffered another huge blow, following the announcement of skipper and top central defender Aly Borromeo that he will be missing the remainder of the tournament.

An imposing stopper on opponents' attacking third and a scoring threat on set pieces, the 6-foot-2 Borromeo will be out for at least two months due to an MRL sprain that he sustained in the lead up to Malaysia's first goal eight minutes into their 4-0 loss in Group A Friday at the Suphachalasai Stadium.

But more than his defensive presence and his scoring ability, it will be the Kaya FC star's leadership that will be sorely missed on the pitch.

Coach Aris Caslib has challenged his players to raise their games a notch to fill the void left by Borromeo, the second RP player after Filipino-American Henry Brauner to miss games due to an illness or an injury. Brauner skipped the Malaysia match because of a bum stomach.

Caslib attributed Borromeo's injury to the poor condition of the pitch. "I think the pitch condition should be reconsidered," said Borromeo after the game against Malaysia.

For the must-win encounter against Thailand at 8 tonight, Caslib plans to put rightback Anton del Rosario at central defense beside Jhapeth Sablon, while Jerome Orcullo, an unused substitute in the first game, and striker Dan Padernal may assume Del Rosario's position

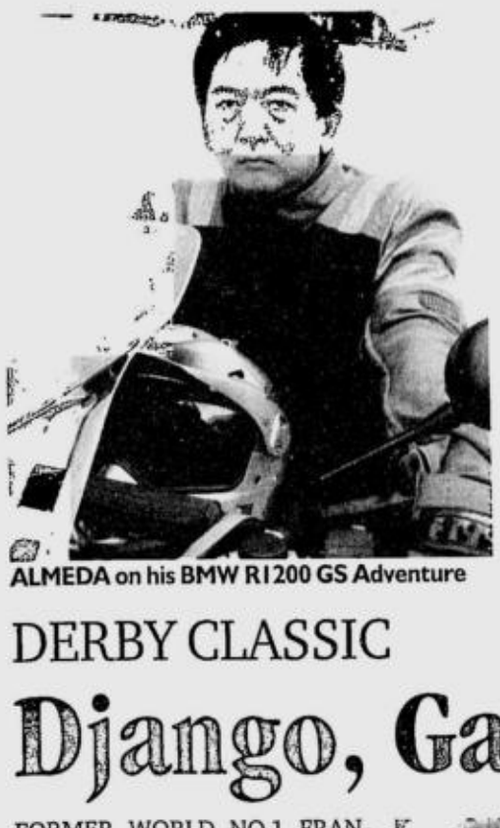
"The result (against Malaysia) was unacceptable. We did not expect that result but we have to leave it behind us now," assistant coach Marlon Maro said at the pre-match conference yesterday.

The Thais, who needed a last-gasp equalizer from young midfielder Suchao Nutnum to salvage a 1-1 draw with Myanmar, are also planning to bring in a second-string line-up for tonight's match.

"Definitely, we will rest some good players," said assistant coach Sompul Chomchuen. "The Philippines showed poor technique against Malaysia" *Cedelf P. Tupas*

Games Live on Star Sports
5:30 p.m.—Myanmar vs Malaysia
8 p.m.—RP vs Thailand

Almeda rules Ironman moto race



ALMEDA on his BMW R1200 GS Adventure

JOEY ALMEDA, ABOARD A BMW R1200 GS Adventure, logged the fastest time of 15 hours and 59 minutes in the 1st Ironman Motorcycle Rally which ended at the Clark Hotel in Clark Field, Pampanga, recently.

What made the feat more impressive was the fact that the veteran motocross and race driver, who also normed the fastest speed of 230kph, was nursing a fractured rib cage he sustained from an endurocross tournament a week earlier.

The race, patterned after the Ironbutt Motorcycle Rally in the United States and organized by the BMW Owners Society, took the riders on a northern Luzon loop with the first required log-in checkpoint at Tuguegarao.

Other checkpoints along the route were located in Laoag, Baguio with the final checkpoint/finish was at the Clark Hotel in Pampanga.

Second fastest time was logged in by Francis Rivera, president of the BMW Owners Society, aboard a BMW R1200 GS. Nani Pazcoguin came in 3rd with his Yamaha R6. Of the 23 participants, 17 riders finished within the allotted 24-hour time for the 1,200-km journey.

The first rider took off at 4 a.m. Monday from the Shell Diwal Station along Edsa, followed by other riders at two-minute intervals.

There were no mishaps or spills that marred the event, although two of those who did not finish the race (DNF) decided to make a stopover at Vigan while the other rider dropped out due to exhaustion.

The riders and guests were treated to lunch at the residence of Noel Nucup, BOS member, at his house in Mexico, Pampanga.

Rivera also announced that this would be an annual event.

SPORTSWATCH

US champ joins SJC Int'l Derby

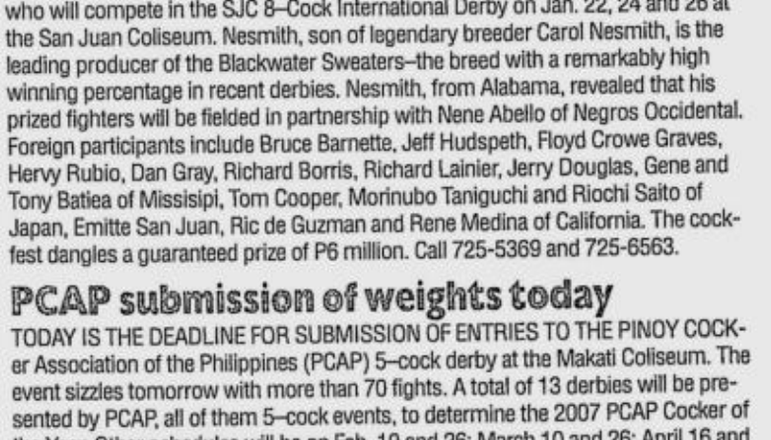
US CHAMPION CHRIS NESMITH LEADS A BIG GROUP OF FOREIGN COCKERS who will compete in the SJC 8–Cock International Derby on Jan. 22, 24 and 26 at the San Juan Coliseum. Nesmith, son of legendary breeder Carol Nesmith, is the leading producer of the Blackwater Sweaters–the breed with a remarkably high winning percentage in recent derbies. Nesmith, from Alabama, revealed that his prized fighters will be fielded in partnership with Nene Abello of Negros Occidental. Foreign participants include Bruce Barnette, Jeff Hudspeth, Floyd Crowe Graves, Hervy Rubio, Dan Gray, Richard Borris, Richard Lainier, Jerry Douglas, Gene and Tony Batiea of Missisipi, Tom Cooper, Morinubo Taniguchi and Riochi Saito of Japan, Emitte San Juan, Ric de Guzman and Rene Medina of California. The cockfest dangles a guaranteed prize of P6 million. Call 725-5369 and 725-6563.

PCAP submission of weights today

TODAY IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES TO THE PINOY COCKer Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5–cock derby at the Makati Coliseum. The event sizzles tomorrow with more than 70 fights. A total of 13 derbies will be presented by PCAP, all of them 5–cock events, to determine the 2007 PCAP Cocker of the Year. Other schedules will be on Feb. 19 and 26; March 10 and 26; April 16 and 30; May 7 and 21; June 4 and 18 and finals on July 7. Businessman Willie Villarica (WRV Gold Line) topped the opening leg on Jan. 6. Meanwhile, another bigtime 5–cock derby unfolds at Makati Coliseum on Jan. 29, with Boy Royo of Laguna as host. For inquiries, call 896–3545 and 895–6475.

Cainta cockfest stakes P1 million

NO LESS THAN 250 COCKERS WILL CONVERGE AT THE CAINTA FAIR CENTER Coliseum for the Pabuenas 5–Cock Smalltime Derby on Jan. 31, Feb. 2, 5, 7, 9 and 12. According to host and CFCC operator Sam Mendoza, this event is designed for smalltime derbyists, hackfight enthusiasts and backyard breeders, thus the low entry fee of only P3,300. The total guaranteed prize amounts to P1 million. Elimination rounds (2–cock) will be held on Jan. 31, Feb. 2, 5, 7 and 9. All qualifiers face one another for the title on Feb. 12. As bonus, the fastest win champion will drive home a brand new motorcycle. Two pointers in the elims will share in the P80,000 day prize. Meanwhile, the CFCC Fastest Win One–Cock Ulutan, with P320,000 up for grabs, takes off on Jan. 25. For details, call 655–3334, 240–0979 o 0928–6316711 (Arnold) and 0915–5656100 (Doc Jovy).



TORRE BACKER: Fianchetto Construction Corp. is supporting Grandmaster Eugene Torre, its vice president, in his international campaigns. Torre hands over to Gold Edge Assets Holding Corp. president Jeffrey Divino one of Fianchetto's finished townhouses. With them are Manuel Luis Iligan and Rowena de Guzman, Fianchetto president and Sales & Marketing manager, respectively.

DERBY CLASSIC

Django, Gandy bolster title drive

FORMER WORLD NO.1 FRANcisco "Django" Bustamante and compatriots Lee Van Corteza and Gandy Valle blasted their respective opponents yesterday to remain in the title hunt of the 2007 Derby City Classic One 9-Ball Division being held at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky.

Bustamante, beat former World 9-ball champion Ralf Souquet of Germany, Corteza trounced Mike Davis of the United States and Valle nipped countryman Jose "Amang" Parica in the eighth round.

Carrying the colors of Puyat Sports stable, Bustamante, who took a bye in the first round beat Bill Hall, Grady Mathews, Barry Boney, Gerlad Slivka, Yannick Beaufils and Scott Frost, respectively, to boost his title drive in the annual $100,000-plus series.

Corteza, who hails from Davao

DJANGO BUSTAMANTE

GANDY VALLE

City and playing for Jonathan Sy stable, on the other hand, demolished Jerry Calderon, Chad Bazinet, Jeff Carter, David Crockett, Ray Shultz, Ronnie Wiseman and Mika Immonen, in that order.

Valle, another pride of Davao City from Bugsy promotion, nipped Fabio Petroni, drew a bye in the second, lost to Vongxay Hongsavady in the third but bounced back by whipping Ben Zimmer, Donald Ludwig Jr., Jonathan Pinegar and Adam Smith.

Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat, also from Sy stable, bowed to David Broxson but can still play in this single elimination format by using his By-In option along with Parica.

Dennis Orcollo, winner of two Ring Game events, suffered back to back loses at the hands of Charles Bryant and five-time world champion Johnny Archer of the United States in the seventh and eighth round.

Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes, who topped the One Pocket event and finished runner-up in the 9-ball Banks division, lost to Bobby Pickle in the fourth and Buddy Hall in the sixth round.

Santos Sambajon, a native of Macalelon, Quezon province, lost to Denver Barger in the second round but did not use his Buy-In option in the next round. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2007

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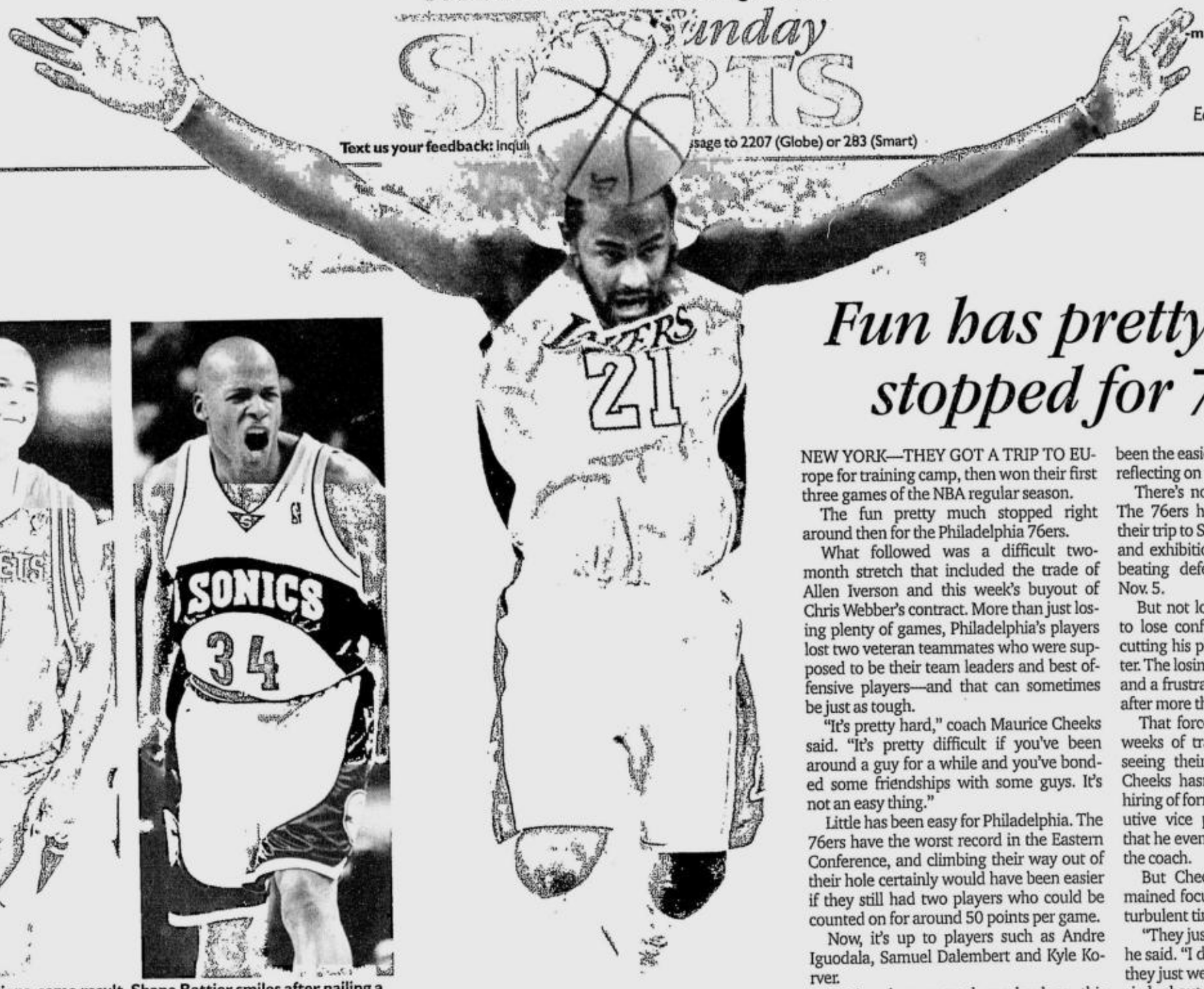


DIFFERENT reactions, same result. Shane Battier smiles after nailing a big triple for the Houston Rockets while Rey Allen screams in delight after draining a clutch trey for the Seattle Supersonics. AP

THE Lakers' Ronny Turiaf scores on a slam. REUTERS

Fun has pretty much stopped for 76ers

NEW YORK—THEY GOT A TRIP TO EUrope for training camp, then won their first three games of the NBA regular season.

The fun pretty much stopped right around then for the Philadelphia 76ers.

What followed was a difficult two-month stretch that included the trade of Allen Iverson and this week's buyout of Chris Webber's contract. More than just losing plenty of games, Philadelphia's players lost two veteran teammates who were supposed to be their team leaders and best offensive players—and that can sometimes be just as tough.

"It's pretty hard," coach Maurice Cheeks said. "It's pretty difficult if you've been around a guy for a while and you've bonded some friendships with some guys. It's not an easy thing."

Little has been easy for Philadelphia. The 76ers have the worst record in the Eastern Conference, and climbing their way out of their hole certainly would have been easier if they still had two players who could be counted on for around 50 points per game.

Now, it's up to players such as Andre Iguodala, Samuel Dalembert and Kyle Korver.

"We've done a total overhaul on this team," Korver said. "And you know, it hasn't been the easiest few months. There's no use reflecting on what's happened."

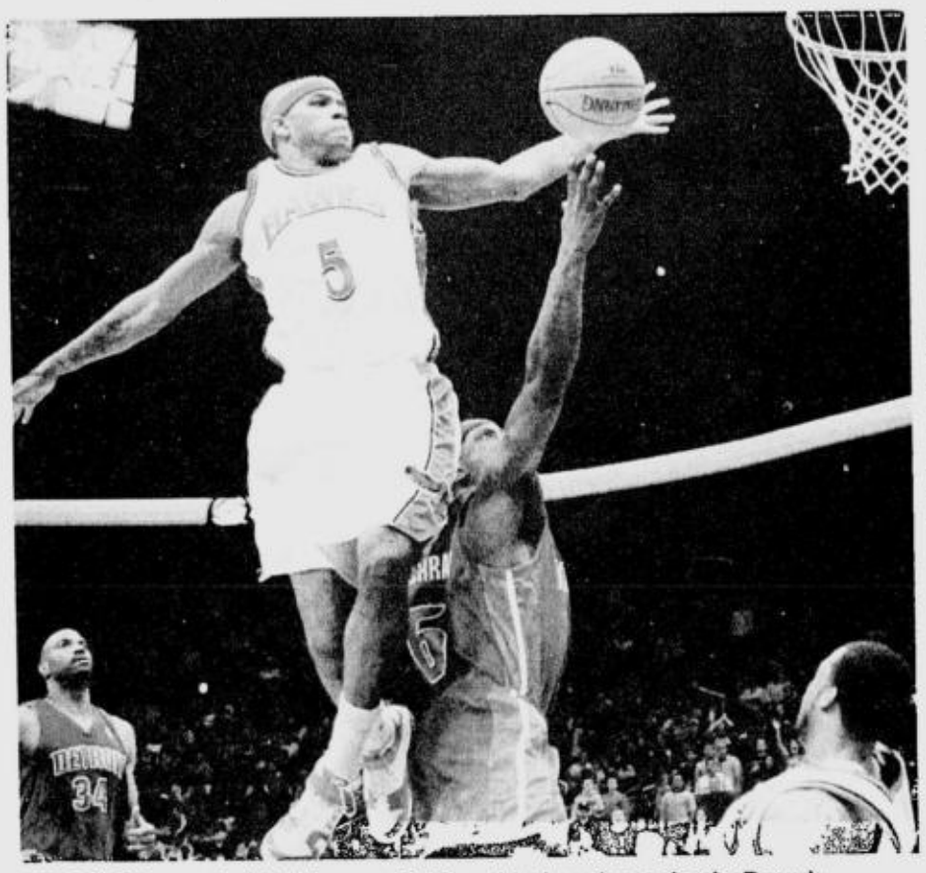
There's not much worth remembering. The 76ers had a chance to bond during their trip to Spain and Germany for training and exhibition games, and were 3-0 after beating defending champion Miami on Nov. 5.

But not long after that, Cheeks seemed to lose confidence in Webber and began cutting his playing time in the fourth quarter. The losing began around the same time, and a frustrated Iverson asked to be traded after more than 10 seasons in Philadelphia.

That forced Sixers players to deal with weeks of trade rumors—sometimes even seeing their own names included. Even Cheeks hasn't been immune—the recent hiring of former coach Larry Brown as executive vice president sparked speculation that he eventually would replace Cheeks as the coach.

But Cheeks said his players have remained focused on the court through their turbulent times.

"They just continued to go out and play," he said. "I don't think they focus in on that, they just went out and played and not worried about the other stuff because they couldn't control it anyway." *AP*



ATLANTA leaper Josh Smith soars high for a block against a shot by Detroit swingman Ronald Murray. Murray, however, got a break when a foul was called on forward Shelden Williams, who falls to the ground at the contact. AP

Dirk powers Mavs

German ace scores 43; Allen fires 54

INDIANAPOLIS—GERMAN star Dirk Nowitzki scored eight of his season-high 43 points in overtime as the Dallas Mavericks posted a 115-113 win over the Indiana Pacers.

Jason Terry contributed 30 points, including the go-ahead jumper with 27 seconds left in overtime for Dallas, which won Friday for the 16th time in 17 games.

Nowitzki hobbled to the sideline with 2:53 left in regulation after injuring his hip.

But after a timeout, he returned to the floor and continued to be a major headache for the Pacers.

"I think I hit (Al) Harrington or bounced off Harrington as he came off my pick," Nowitzki said. "I felt a little twinge and twist of it in my hip. But it seemed to loosen up going into the overtime."

In an overtime that featured eight lead changes, Nowitzki drilled a jumper, a 3-pointer and made three free throws. He split two foul shots with two seconds left for a 115-113 lead, then the Pacers were unable to get off a final shot.

In Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored 34 points and Josh Smith, just back from hernia surgery, hit a 3-pointer with 10.7 seconds left to help the Hawks hold off the Detroit Pistons, 99-93.

Johnson finished 13-of-17 from the field, making four from 3-point range. Smith, operated on Dec. 26, scored only five points in 31 minutes but looked strong at the end.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored a career-high 54 points, the second-most in franchise history, and the Supersonics snapped a six-game losing streak with a 122-114 overtime win over the Utah Jazz.

Allen made nearly every shot in the closing moments of regulation and overtime, carrying the Sonics to their first victory since Dec. 31 against Boston. Allen was 17-for-32 from the field, a perfect 12-for-12 at the stripe and added 10 rebounds.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant, limited by a groin strain, scored 16 of his 28 points in the final 6:44 and Smush Parker had a career-high 26 points, leading the Lakers past the Orlando Magic, 109-106.

In Denver, Shane Battier scored 25 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter, and Houston held off the Nuggets, 90-86, for its eighth win in nine games. *AFP, AP*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Charlotte 126, New York 110; Toronto 95, Boston 86; Dallas 115, Indiana 113 (OT); Atlanta 99, Detroit 93; Minnesota 116, Memphis 110; New Orleans 104, Washington 97; Philadelphia 110, Milwaukee 97; Portland 95, Sacramento 87; Miami 118, Golden State 96; Houston 90, DenveR 86; LA Lakers 109, Orlando 106; Seattle 122, Utah 114 (OT)

Beckham: It's soccer, not Hollywood

MARINA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA—DAVID Beckham's focus will be on the Los Angeles pitch, not the Hollywood glitz.

Forgetting for the moment that Beckham's wife, Victoria, is a former Spice Girl, that they rank Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes among their best friends, and that one of Los Angeles' premier talent agencies negotiated his new contract with Major League Soccer's Galaxy, Beckham is trying to concentrate on soccer.

"I'm coming there not to be a superstar," the 31-year-old Beckham said Friday via satellite from Madrid, Spain. "I'm coming there to be part of the team, to work hard and to hopefully win things.

"With me, it's about football. I'm coming there to make a difference. I'm coming there to play football."

Reporters were not allowed to pose questions. Instead, a moderator did the asking.

Beckham said he hopes to work with American youngsters and keep them interested in soccer when they are finished with youth leagues.

He's joining a so-so team in Major League Soccer, considered sort of bush league by fans in the more fervent soccer countries around the world.

"I'm not saying me coming over to the States is going to make soccer the biggest sport in America. That would be difficult to achieve," Beckham said. "Baseball, basketball, American football, they've been around.

"But I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't think I could make a difference."

Galaxy general manager Alexi Lalas, who was one of America's best-known players, said the decision to sign Beckham "was based on soccer."

"At the end of the day, this team needs to win on the field," Lalas said.

Lalas said he did not think Beckham should be blamed for the lack of success by either Real Madrid or England's national team.

Beckham plans to fulfill his contract with Real Madrid before heading for the United States. He is not expected to join the Galaxy, whose MLS season begins in April, until August.

His five-year deal with the team, one of three MLS franchises owned by AEG, is believed to be for around $10 million (euro8 million) a year. His representatives have said that outside endorsements could run his income to $250 million.

Beckham mentioned that he has watched Cobi Jones play in the World Cup and now he will line up beside him with the Galaxy.

Jones, 36, believes Beckham will have a positive impact on his teammates.

"I know if I'm running around the field with a David Beckham, I want to impress him," Jones said. "I want him to go, 'Hey, this guy is good.' I think it's going to give us a credibility and a perspective.

"A lot of people don't have a perspective of how good these guys in the MLS are," he said.

Though he won't immediately be besieged as he is in Europe, he has been gaining attention in the United States since the movie "Bend It Like Beckham."

Beckham said his wife and their three children aren't packed yet, and added with a grin, "It might take a while with Victoria." *AP*

HARD AT WORK: Russian tennis poster girl Maria Sharapova practices on Rod Laver Arena as she prepares for next week's Australian Open, where she is seeded No. 1, in Melbourne. AP

Wie, Pagunsan miss Sony Open golf cut

HONOLULU—A TEENAGER FROM Hawaii stole the limelight in the Sony Open, and it wasn't Michelle Wie.

A day after Wie gave it a good run at Canoe Brook last summer in her bid to become the first woman to qualify for the US Open, Tadd Fujikawa made it to Winged Foot by winning the sectional qualifier in Hawaii.

Friday brought the pint-sized high school student even more attention, and a far greater thrill.

With all the attention on Wie trying to make the cut in her fourth start at the Sony Open—she wasn't even close—it was Fujikawa who caused a stir at Waialae as he closed in on history. A 15-foot birdie on the 16th hole put him one shot inside the cut line. Then came a finish he won't soon forget, making a 15-foot eagle on the 18th hole for a 4-under 66.

Filipino Juvic Pagunsan rallied with a 72 Friday but finished with a 147 total, seven shots off the cut line.

Four days after turning 16, the 5-foot-1 Fujikawa became the youngest player in 50 years to make the cut on the PGA Tour.

He tugged at his chubby cheeks with both hands as the significance began to sink in.

"I'm so excited," Fujikawa said. "Making the cut is an awesome thing for me right now. I wish everybody in the world could feel what I'm feeling now."

Wie felt it from a distance.

The 17-year-old was wrapping up her press conference after a 76 to miss the cut by 14 shots when she heard a roar that resonated a half-mile away to the clubhouse. She was told that Fujikawa had made the cut in only his second PGA Tour start (the other was an 81-77 showing at Winged Foot).

"I've never played with him or talked with him," Wie said. "It's great being how young he is. I'm rooting for him."

Luke Donald opened with seven straight pars and finished with three birdies over his final four holes for a 66, giving him a share of the lead with Paul Goydos (63). *AP*

Roddick beats Federer in 'wrong' event

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—ANDY Roddick snapped his losing streak against Roger Federer.

Unfortunately for him, the result of the exhibition match does not count on their official records.

The defending champion picked up a confidence boosting 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 win Saturday over top-ranked Federer in the final of the invitational Kooyong Classic.

But he remains 1-12 officially in his career against Federer, who looked good in patches in the second set on the weekend before he begins his Australian Open title defense.

Asked after the match if he'd prefer to trade the win for one at Melbourne Park, Roddick walked toward Federer holding up the trophy and asked: "Can we do that?"

Federer is a hot favorite to win the Australian Open, which would be his 10th Grand Slam title.

He compiled a 92-5 season in 2006, losing only to No. 2-ranked Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray. *AP*

Website: www.inq7money.net

Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

ck: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) **E-mail:** business@inquirer.com.ph

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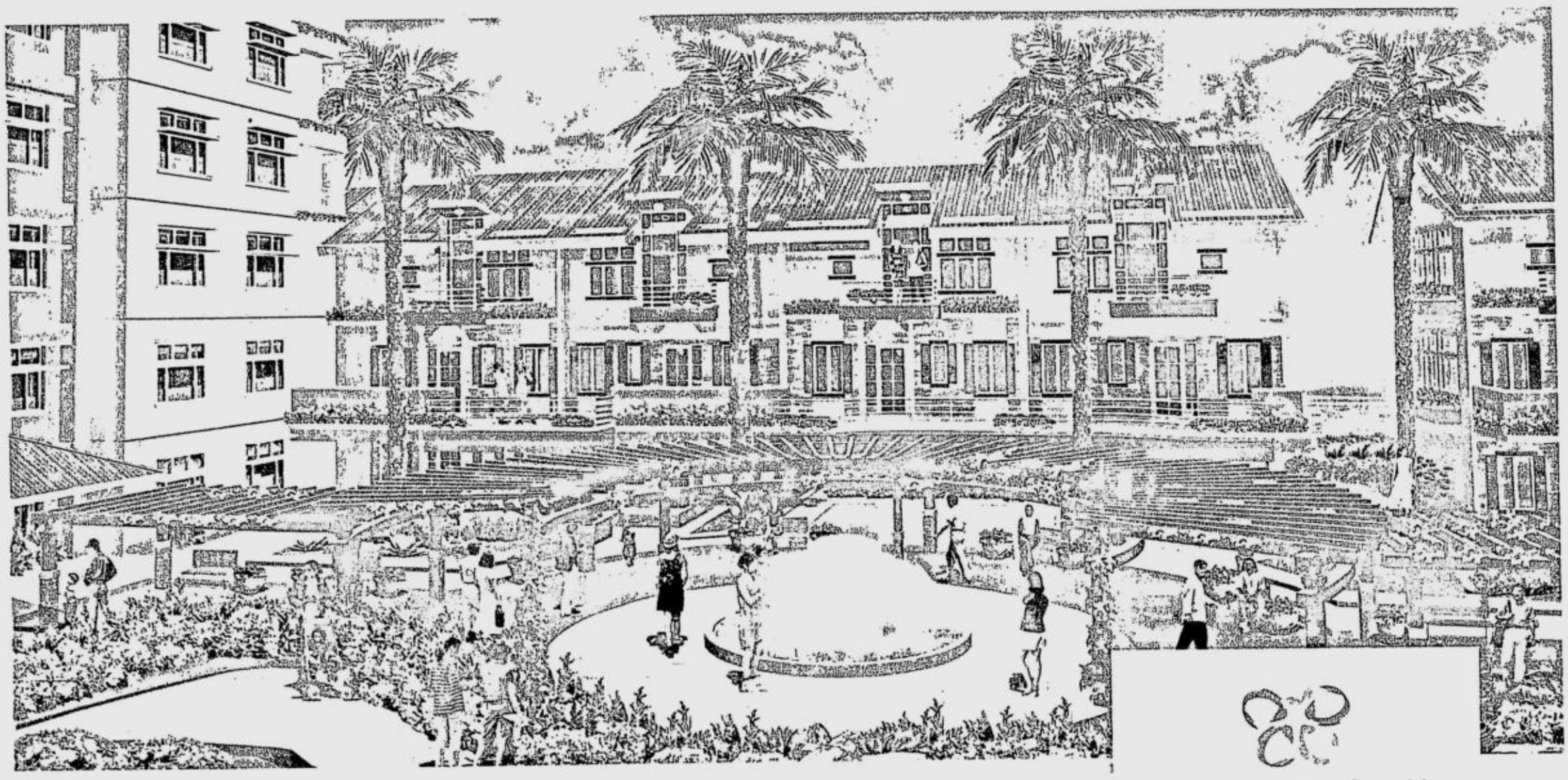
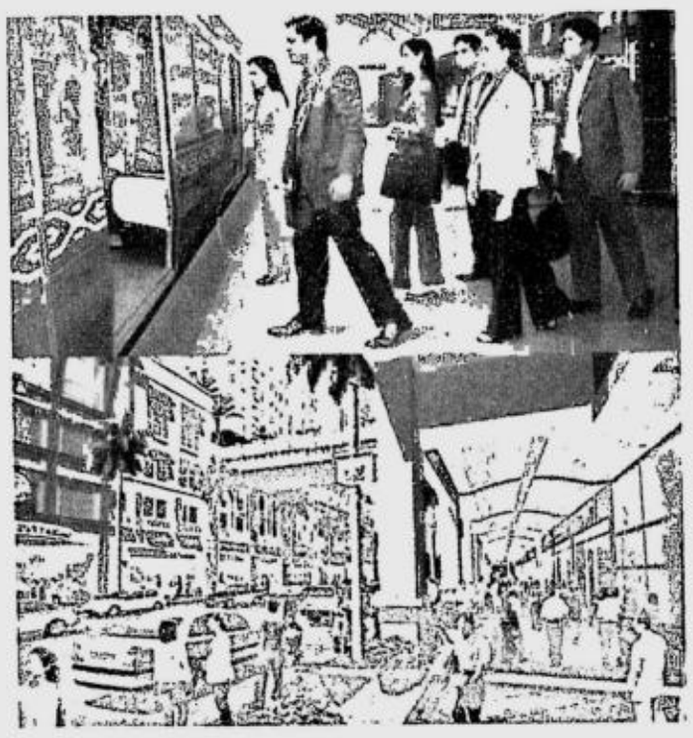


Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER

A Matchless Location at the Metro's Center.

Go from home to the heart of the action in no time. At Manhattan Parkway, the first phase of Manhattan Garden City, enjoy the benefits of living in the country's first-ever transit-oriented development. Experience the freedom to go places with utmost ease via the LRT-2 and MRT-3. And reach the north, east, west and south sides of Metro Manila in one go. What's more, be a walk away from the Araneta Center and its shops, offices, restaurants and entertainment hubs.



Surrounded by the city's key destinations.

Your Parkway home is encircled by everything the city has to offer. And you're just a train ride away from it all. Walk down an exclusive **729-meter-long garden footbridge** four stories above street level. Take in its park-like scenery. And arrive at the LRT-2 and MRT-3 stations safely and without the hassles of traffic.

From the LRT-2 along Aurora Boulevard, Ateneo and UP in Quezon City and Manila's university belt are just minutes away. The MRT-3 along EDSA brings Makati, Ortigas and Taft Avenue within easy reach. Both lines join up with the LRT-1, making it easy to go anywhere from Monumento in Caloocan to Baclaran in Parañaque.

Surrounded by the Araneta Center's hot spots.

Be in the middle of a pulsating lifestyle and leisure center: the Araneta Center. From your home, a four-story **transfer station** with a hotel-style lobby, grand staircase and four passenger elevators brings you to the third level of Gateway Mall, which hosts the Oasis, a unique floating garden. From here, simply walk to the Araneta Coliseum. Or to Rustan's, SM, Shopwise, Ali Mall or Farmers Plaza.

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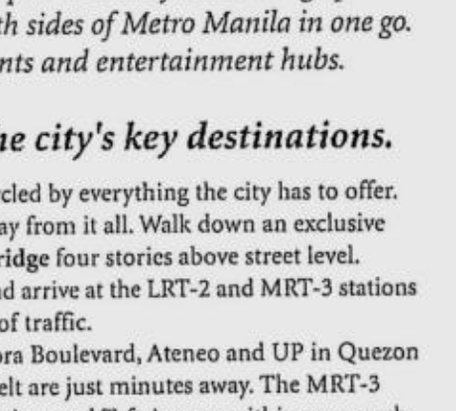

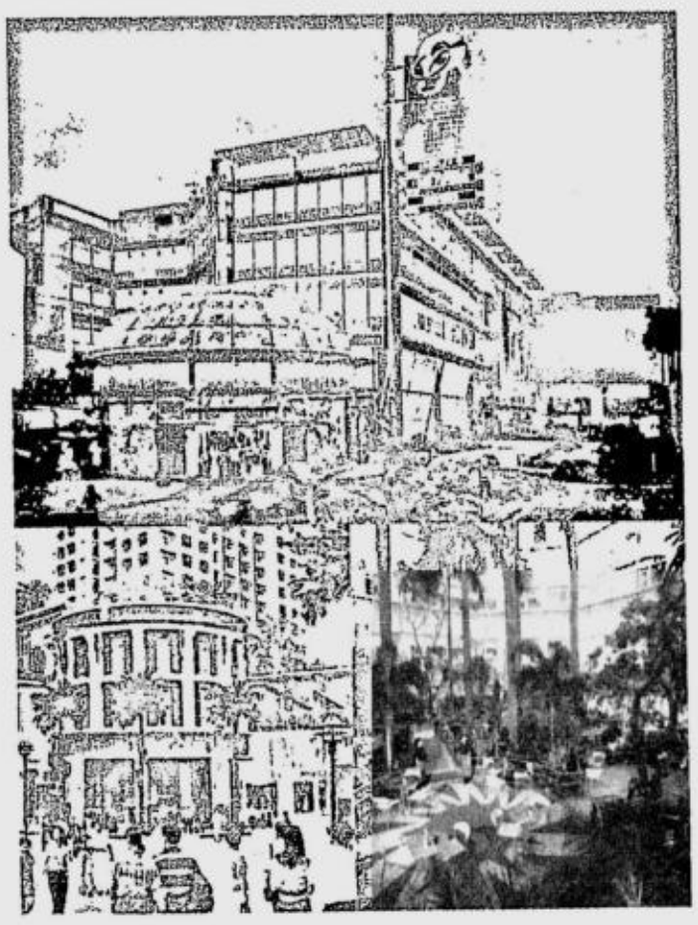

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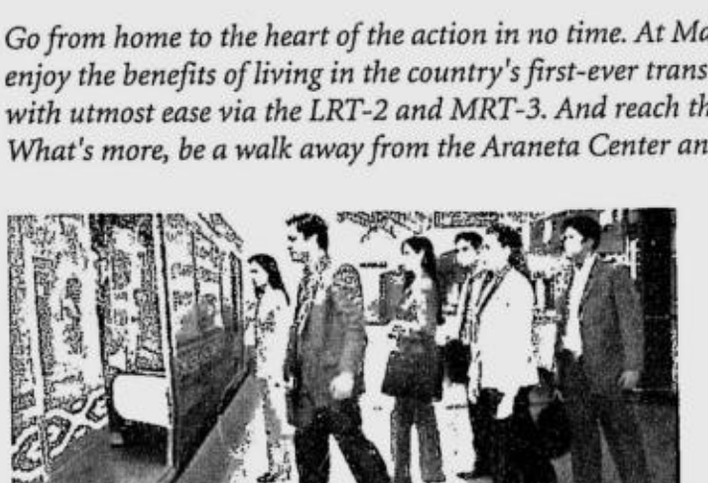

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For Announcement Purposes Only

Preaching a culture of peace for ten years

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

HE WAS THE ONLY ONE AMONG 25 leaders from around the world who took part in the Eisenhower Fellowships-Multi-Nation Program of 2005 who did not have a degree to his name.

The program brings emerging leaders to meet with leaders of different fields in 10 to 12 cities in the United States, in the hope of promoting a "more prosperous and just world."

Datu Ibrahim Pendatun Paglas III, who played basketball as much as he went to classes, dropped out of his engineering studies at the University of Mindanao in Davao City in 1983 and his Agriculture studies at the Gregorio Araneta University Foundation in Manila in 1987.

Almost all of his colleagues, on the other hand, had more than one degree, with PhDs, LLBs or MBAs attached to their names.

Meaningful accomplishment

But the 6-foot Paglas, who is more comfortable in jeans and a white T-shirt, did not win the prestigious fellowship in the United States for his academic achievements, but rather for his arguably even more meaningful accomplishment of nurturing a culture of peace and development in his hometown of Datu Paglas, Maguindanao in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

That boosted his confidence and enabled him to take part in the discussions with his classmates and even learn how to use a laptop computer.

"I would listen to them talk about economics and governance. I listen and consolidate their best ideas. When I put them all together, I sounded like the brightest person in the class," Paglas says in jest.

He realized then that education was continuing process and he vows to share what he learned with his fellow Muslims in Mindanao, particularly in the prospering town of Datu Paglas.

As recently as 10 years ago, only people with a death wish passed through Datu Paglas at night.

Guns and violence were part of life for the residents of the 5th class municipality, many of whom were members, sympathizers or former members of rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

But through the efforts of Paglas, former mayor of the municipality, and part of a dominant political and economic clan that has produced a senator, a general and political leaders, visions of Datu Paglas as a war zone to end all war zones have been relegated to memory.

Beehive of activity

Today, it is a beehive of economic activity as it is home to the lone foreign investment in poverty-stricken ARMM—La Frutera Inc., which exports top quality bananas to the Middle East, Iran, Japan, China, Korea under the brands Chiquita and Unifrutti.

What used to be idle property that was home to rebels is now a sprawling 1,800-hectare banana plantation that generates an annual revenue of between $10 million and $15 million, and the hands that used to hold guns and knives now pitch in to ship out five to six million boxes of bananas each year.

To say that transforming a war zone into an economic zone was difficult is an understatement, as the 45-year-old "Toto" Paglas knows only too well.

Paglas was still mayor in 1996 when a friend of his, who was with the United States Agency for International Development, informed him that a group of foreign investors was looking for land in Mindanao that could be developed into a banana plantation.

He was recommended because his family had land, and he could convince the owners of the land around his family's property to agree to a lease contract.

Datu Paglas was just what the investors from Italy, Saudi Arabia and the United States were looking for as it had fertile land, ideal temperature, and was in a typhoon-free location. There was a lot of water and cheap electricity and labor can be easily trained.

DATU Ibrahim Pendatun Paglas III

Awaited opportunity

It was not difficult to convince him to come on board and offer his land as he has long been waiting for the opportunity to have economic development in Datu Paglas.

"I wondered at that time why our people were so poor," Paglas tells the INQUIRER, "and one answer was that we have always been talking about politics, and not enough of economics, and business is what we need to develop."

Convincing him to join the project was one thing, but quite another to get other people, especially the residents and the landowners, to welcome the investment as they have heard similar promises of economic development before, and all went to naught.

And it did not help that most of the supervisors were Christian and the technology would be taught by Israeli experts.

Paglas says it was fortunate that he was a *datu* or noble leader, and still carried some credibility with the people, for he was able to convince the people, including his uncle, MILF leader Hashim Salamat to at least give the investment a chance to take root and survive.

"The most difficult part about the venture was convincing our Muslim constituents to accept the project and see it as our way to economic development," Paglas says, "There was no trust and it took a while for them to accept the changes that they had to make."

Leader by example

One of the first problems, for instance, was the fact that the Muslims refused to lay down their arms, insisting on bringing them to work, making the foreigners uncomfortable.

So Paglas did the unthinkable and dropped his own coterie of bodyguards, convoy and guns.

"How else could I convince them to lay down their arms when they see me with bodyguards and guns," Paglas says, "It was difficult because leaders were always portrayed as having a lot of guns, but it was something I had to do."

Then there was the problem of the Israelis insisting on waking the workers up at 4:30 in the morning for exercise before starting work at 5 a.m., an ungodly hour for Muslims used to waking up at 9 in the morning.

Paglas was no different, but he forced himself to wake up and was usually the first to be at the plantation at 5 in the morning. Eventually, the workers followed his example and came to work early.

Another problem that cropped up was that many of the Muslim workers resented the fact that their supervisor was either a Christian or a foreigner.

"That was when I, as a Muslim myself, told them that our problem is education," Paglas says. "I just told them that if we wanted to be like them (foreigners and Christians), then we have to study and learn from them."

The Muslims took to the challenge.

They learned from their supervisors and proved themselves equal to the task and responsibility of running a plantation that had to compete with among the world's best.

La Frutera today has about 60 Muslim supervisors and one of the best is former MILF battalion commander, Kumander Spider.

It has been almost 10 years since Datu Paglas went into banana production and the rewards have been sweet, indeed.

Income for the people

Paglas proudly says that some 2,500 workers here today have income when they used to have none.

Most of them have their own television sets, comfort rooms, savings in the rural bank and an appliance center and now have the luxury of dreaming a better life for themselves and their families, and they enjoy peace that has eluded them for generations.

But the biggest benefit that does not carry a price tag is that the workers learned more about their Christian and Jewish brothers, from whom they have learned so much. And they learned from them as well.

Together, they built an enterprise that has become a living and successful showcase of how a business investment can lead to peace, brotherhood and development.

Inspired by the success in Datu Paglas, La Frutera has expanded its operations to include two plantations in Lanao del Sur with a combined area of 2,000 hectares. It is also working on a plantation that will produce palm oil, and another that will produce pickles—both for the export market.

"We are replicating the model of Christian-Muslim brotherhood in Datu Paglas in these areas," Paglas said, "the operation that covers 3,000 hectares now benefits 5,000 workers."

Accolades

His role in fostering this peace and development earned for him not only a comfortable living through the Paglas group of companies did not go unnoticed.

He is the only Muslim, for instance, to have won the Ten Outstanding Young Men Award for turning Datu Paglas into a peace and economic zone, he also sits as chair of the advisory committee for the business and peace program of the Philippine Business for Social Progress and was the sole nominee from the Philippines to The Outstanding People of the World in Sapporo, Japan in 2000.

He says he still cannot believe that he was able to get into the Dwight Eisenhower fellowship, being a college drop-out.

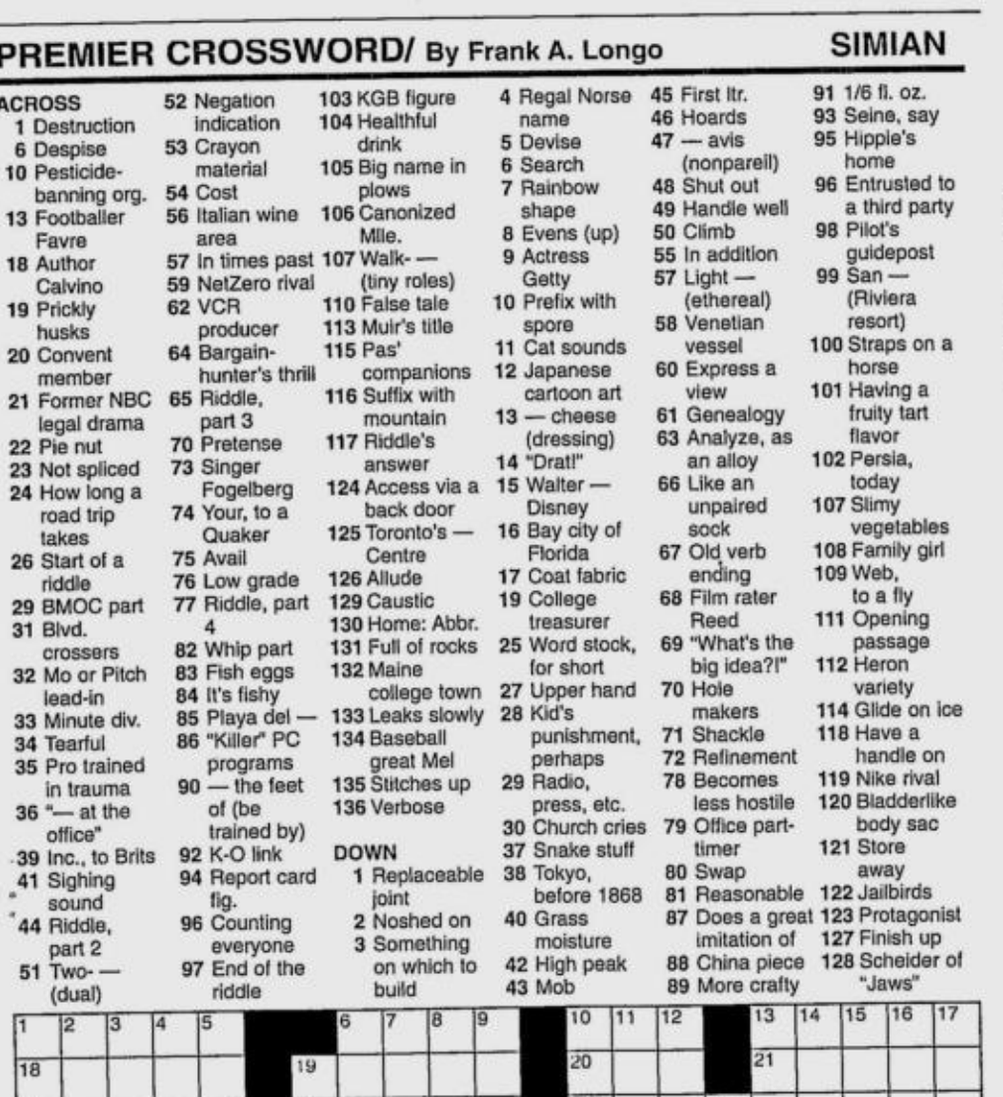
But his cofellows always tell him that he more than earned his place in the elite circle because he did something they can only dream about doing: Make a real, meaningful and tangible difference in the lives of his people and his country.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — **SIMIAN**

ACROSS
1 Destruction
6 Despise
10 Pesticide-banning org.
13 Footballer Favre
18 Author Calvino
19 Prickly husks
20 Convent member
21 Former NBC legal drama
22 Pie nut
23 Not spliced
24 How long a road trip takes
26 Start of a riddle
29 BMOC part
31 Blvd. crossers
32 Mo or Pitch lead-in
33 Minute div.
34 Tearful
35 Pro trained in trauma
36 "— at the office"
39 Inc., to Brits
41 Sighing sound
44 Riddle, part 2
51 Two- — (dual)
52 Negation indication
53 Crayon material
54 Cost
56 Italian wine area
57 In times past
59 NetZero rival
62 VCR producer
64 Bargain-hunter's thrill
65 Riddle, part 3
70 Pretense
73 Singer Fogelberg
74 Your, to a Quaker
75 Avail
76 Low grade
77 Riddle, part 4
82 Whip part
83 Fish eggs
84 It's fishy
85 Playa del —
86 "Killer" PC programs
90 — the feet of (be trained by)
92 K-O link
94 Report card fig.
96 Counting everyone
97 End of the riddle
103 KGB figure
104 Healthful drink
105 Big name in plows
106 Canonized Mlle.
107 Walk- — (tiny roles)
110 False tale
113 Muir's title
115 Pas' companions
116 Suffix with mountain
117 Riddle's answer
124 Access via a back door
125 Toronto's — Centre
126 Allude
129 Caustic
130 Home: Abbr.
131 Full of rocks
132 Maine college town
133 Leaks slowly
134 Baseball great Mel
135 Stitches up
136 Verbose

DOWN
1 Replaceable joint
2 Noshed on
3 Something on which to build
4 Regal Norse name
5 Devise
6 Search
7 Rainbow shape
8 Evens (up)
9 Actress Getty
10 Prefix with spore
11 Cat sounds
12 Japanese cartoon art
13 — cheese (dressing)
14 "Drat!"
15 Walter — Disney
16 Bay city of Florida
17 Coat fabric
19 College treasurer
25 Word stock, for short
27 Upper hand
28 Kid's punishment, perhaps
29 Radio, press, etc.
30 Church cries
37 Snake stuff
38 Tokyo, before 1868
40 Grass moisture
42 High peak
43 Mob
45 First ltr.
46 Hoards
47 — avis (nonpareil)
48 Shut out
49 Handle well
50 Climb
55 In addition
57 Light — (ethereal)
58 Venetian vessel
60 Express a view
61 Genealogy
63 Analyze, as an alloy
66 Like an unpaired sock
67 Old verb ending
68 Film rater Reed
69 "What's the big idea?!"
70 Hole makers
71 Shackle
72 Refinement
78 Becomes less hostile
79 Office part-timer
80 Swap
81 Reasonable
87 Does a great imitation of
88 China piece
89 More crafty
91 1/6 fl. oz.
93 Seine, say
95 Hippie's home
96 Entrusted to a third party
98 Pilot's guidepost
99 San — (Riviera resort)
100 Straps on a horse
101 Having a fruity tart flavor
102 Persia, today
107 Slimy vegetables
108 Family girl
109 Web, to a fly
111 Opening passage
112 Heron variety
114 Glide on ice
118 Have a handle on
119 Nike rival
120 Bladderlike body sac
121 Store away
122 Jailbirds
123 Protagonist
127 Finish up
128 Scheider of "Jaws"



answer on page C4

Pearl2 makes the big difference in SMEs' lives

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—WHEN CHEAP BILLIARD tables from Korea entered the market in 2002, Obras de Dedos owner Marvic Fajardo-Salazar had to cut down her workforce from 40 to five.

The Iloilo City-based company, however, overcame the crisis when it shifted to producing high-end furniture upon the encouragement of the Iloilo Furniture Manufacturers Association (Ifma), a partner-business support organization (BSO) of the Private Enterprise Accelerated Resource Linkages 2 (Pearl2).

Considered as the flagship project of the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) for private sector development in the Philippines, Pearl2 provides assistance to small and medium enterprises, through BSOs, to enable them to remain competitive and, as a result, create sustainable jobs for Filipinos.

In 2003, the Ifma prevailed on Salazar to join the organization and use her existing equipment and skilled workers to start a high-end furniture making business.

Salazar participated in various local and international shows to market her furniture.

She did not get any order from the first show in October 2004 but the second show generated an order. She has since participated in succeeding fairs here and abroad.

As a result, Obras de Dedos has received total orders of $75,000 (about P3.6 million) from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Dubai, India and Middle East countries, a far cry from the $5,000 (P245,000) order she had before she joined the trade fairs.

She now has 15 to 20 direct workers and subcontracts her stainless steel and upholstery requirement to another Ifma member in Iloilo City.

Another partner BSO, the Cebu Furniture Industry Foundation Inc. (CFIF), has also been receiving assistance from Pearl2 for about three years.

CFIF executive director Ruby Babao-Salutan noted that Pearl2 has been instrumental in making the entire furniture industry competitive. CFIF has a membership base reaching 162 manufacturers and exporters and 12 subcontractors.

THE CEBU Furniture Industry Foundation (CFIF) sent its own delegation to the 2006 MACEF International Home Show at Milan, Italy last January 2006 under the banner, "CEBU X GOES ABROAD" Program.

Since Pearl2's main thrust is the strengthening of BSOs, like CFIF, the partner-BSOs delivered better services to its members.

At a time when Philippine furniture exporters face stiff competition from their counterparts in China, Indonesia and Vietnam, the furniture export sector needs Pearl2 assistance, especially in trade fair participation, to access new markets.

"Pearl2 tremendously boosted our capacity to deliver services to our members so they would be more competitive," Salutan says.

The subsidies provided by Pearl2 to CFIF for participation in international fairs, staff training and international consultants have generated positive impact on both the CFIF and its individual members, she pointed out.

"Normally, many of our members could not afford to participate in international fairs or hire international consultants. The Pearl2 subsidies enables them to do these things," Salutan explains.

According to Pearl2 data, the sales generated from trade fairs it supported during the fiscal year 2005-2006 reached about $22 million, up from over $12 million for fiscal year 2004-2005.

Another of Pearl2's achievements is the creation of the BSOs' Executive Directors Network, which would help sustain Pearl2 programs, she adds.

Indeed, at first glance, this project does not strike one as having great impact on the community. But a closer look would show that Cida's Pearl2 has helped create thousands of jobs in the countryside since its inception.

Pearl2 accomplished this through the financial and technical support extended to small and medium-sized exporters, which enabled them to improve their market access, production

PEARL2/ B3

Pearl2 . . .

From page B2

efficiency and design capability.

For this reason, the export sector here welcomed the one-year extension of the program, which would have ended in November 2007.

Jenifer Cruz, president of the Cebu Gifts, Toys and Houseware Inc., says the extension of Pearl2 would benefit the small exporters.

Cruz says the Pearl2 has been providing training for the business support organizations (BSOs), like the Cebu GTH, that enable BSOs to help their member-companies.

Data gathered by Pearl2 from the BSOs the program supports showed that direct employment alone for exporters that benefited from the program has reached about 130,000.

These small companies also created indirect employment since these usually outsource some of its production.

For example, Cruz's company, 33Point3, has outsourced weaving jobs to 3,500 families in Cebu and Bohol.

Most of these families, which are in the agricultural sector, earn up to P2,500 weekly on top of the income they earn from farming, Cruz says.

While the P10,000 monthly earnings from the outsource jobs would not mean much, he notes that the standard of living of these families have improved.

"Now, they could send their children to school. They could buy motorbikes," Cruz points out.

Even the community has benefited from the improved purchasing power of the beneficiary families, he said.

"In Antequerra (Bohol), the economic activity is much better. The public wet market used to open only on Thursdays and Sundays. Now, it opens daily," Cruz says.

Cruz also says the Pearl2 project has helped the small exporters expand their markets through participation in local and international trade fairs.

Pearl2 subsidizes up to 40 percent of total expenses incurred by the small exporters who, in the past, could not participate in the trade fairs due to limited financial capability, he explains.

"Through the trade fairs, we meet new buyers, including those who could not come to Philippines. We receive orders. We create jobs for the country, especially for the unskilled workers," Cruz says.

He notes that they outsource more than 50 percent of the company's production, a few days after receiving the job order.

Aside from the Cebu GTH and the Ifma, Pearl2 has 17 partner-BSOs, such as the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines, Cebu Fashion Accessories Manufacturers and Exporters Inc., Cebu Software Development Association, Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Association of Negros Producers and the Boracay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Pearl2 extension came about when the Canadian government, through the Cida, approved more than P45 million to fund the one-year extension.

"By strengthening small and medium enterprises in the provinces, young people and residents in rural areas do not necessarily have to go to Manila, Cebu or Davao to look for employment. They could now work in their communities," Canadian Ambassador Peter Sutherland says in a statement.

The project has been providing support for BSOs and chambers of commerce in the labor-intensive sectors of furniture and home furnishings; gifts and houseware; food and food processing; fashion accessories, and organic and natural products.

The Pearl2, which started in 2002, has subsidized the participation of almost 400 small and medium enterprises in more than 60 domestic and international trade fairs.

The extension phase would focus on how the BSOs could sustain the gains generated by the project.

SM NAMED TOP PHILIPPINE RETAILER

SM's retail group was named the Top Philippine Retailer in the 2006 Retail Asia-Pacific Top 500 Awards held recently in Singapore. This is the third time in three years that SM was cited by the Singapore based publication, and its program partners—Euromonitor International, KPMG and Visa. SM president Teresita Sy-Coson receives the Award from Anson Bailey, Director of Business Development of KPMG International of Hong Kong. "These award winning retailers are top in their niche in their respective market," says Steven HL Goh, chair of Retail Asia Publishing's T500 Awards Committee. In 2006, SM opened the SM Mall of Asia which redefined shopping center and retail standards in the Philippines.

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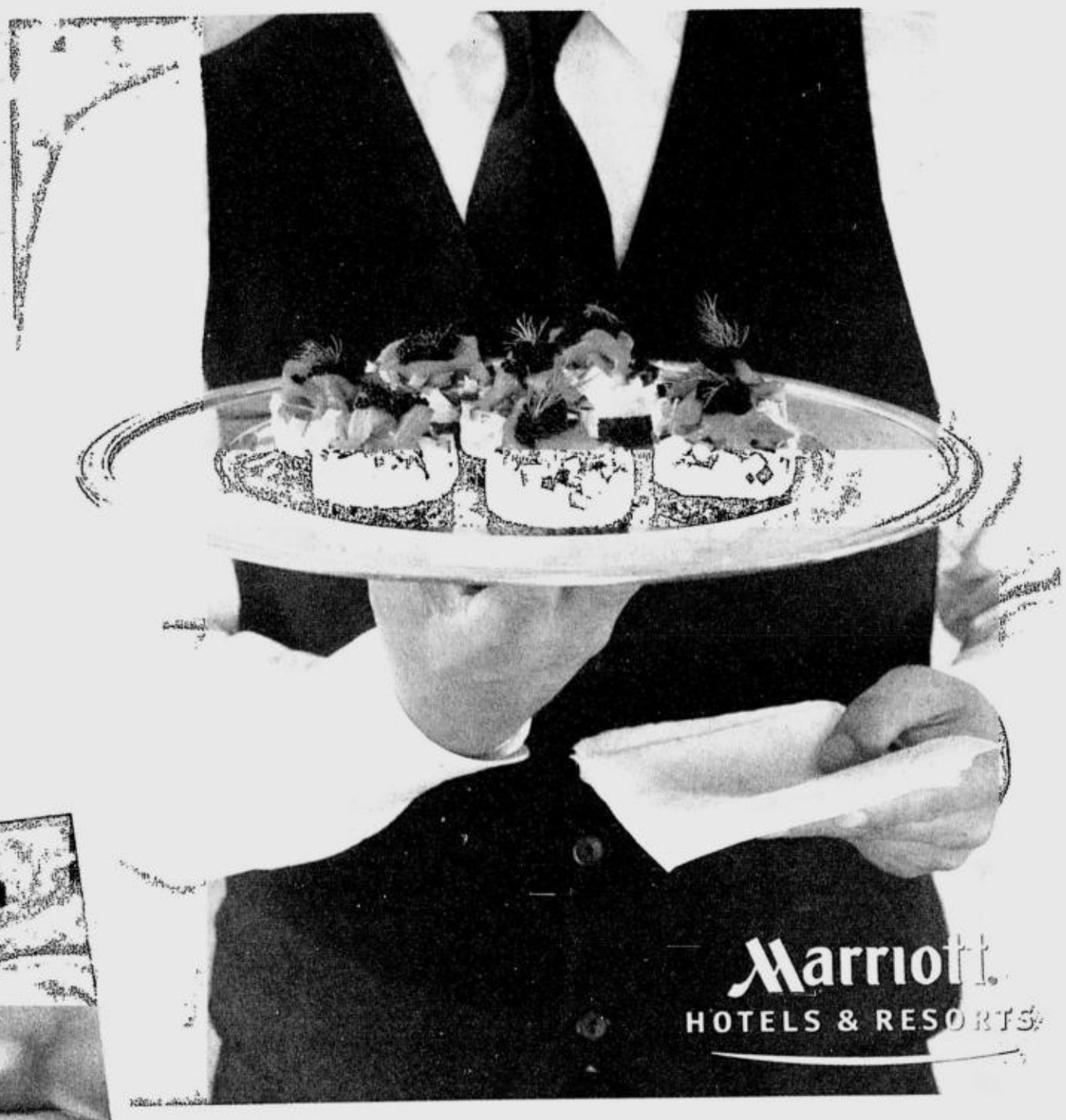

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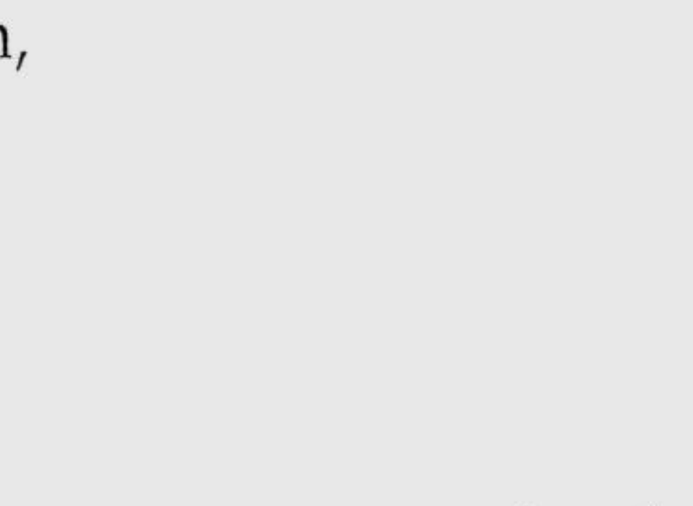

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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POSH & BECKS. Ex-Spice Girl Victoria Adams and soccer star David Beckham REUTERS

Sunday sizzlers

THIS infamous swan gown worn by singer Bjork at the 73rd annual Academy Awards will not be included in this year's retrospective Oscar fashion show. "They wouldn't give it to us," said Oscar producer Laura Ziskin. AP

DID YOU SAY YOU WANTED Sunday to be a day for taking it easy and taking naps? C'mon, you can't be serious. How about making it a day for taking turns at reading this section and for taking stock of what's cool and what's crass, what's good and what's bad, what's some kind of wonderful and what's not.

By the way, we welcome tips, clues and tattletales, subject to verification, of course. Email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph.

Wear are they now?

What is the world's biggest fashion night of the year? The Oscar awards night, that's what. "It's a big celebration of fashion and style," Vogue editor-at-large **Andre Leon Talley** told AP. "The next day, everyone talks about who won and who wore what."

The fashion show will be dramatically memorable this year when Talley curates a retrospective of memorable outfits from the past five decades of the Oscars. Among the collection are 30 of the most iconic red-carpet duds, including two dresses from **Sophia Loren, Diane Keaton**'s trademark white pantsuit, **Sharon Stone**'s newsworthy Gap T-shirt/Valentino skirt combo and **Barbra Streisand**'s unforgettable transparent bell-bottom jumpsuit.

What is Talley dying to include? According to AP: **Ellen Barkin**'s Versace dress from 1993, a Halston gown worn in 1990 by **Glenn Close**, the dress **Julie Andrews** wore in 1965 and "anything from **Natalie Wood**."

Friends?

While the rift between this high-profile celebrity and her sisters doesn't seem anywhere near repair, her long-standing—and very public—feud with her mogul lover's mom is reportedly on the mend.

It is said the younger woman recently sent a present to her not-quite-yet (and maybe-never-to-be) mother-in-law. Surprise! Surprise! Her gesture was acknowledged with a thank-you note from the older lady.

We hope these whispers of a reconciliation are real and as genuine as, say, the gleaming rocks and designer duds of this controversial celeb.

Gone to Guam

Just when you thought you had the mushrooming SM Department Stores all accounted for (total of 28 in the country, according to latest tally), **Henry Sy** and family had to open a store at the Agana Shopping Center in Guam. Add to this international outing their SM shopping centers in China and you can definitely say SM stands for "So Many."

BLUE RIBBON. SM founder and chair Henry Sy Sr. shares honors with Guam Gov. Felix Camacho and First Lady Joanne Camacho at the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open SM Guam.

At the opening, Guam Gov. **Felix Camacho** honored SM founder and chair **Henry Sy Sr.** with the Governor's Guahan Award, naming him an Ambassador of Goodwill of Guam. The award was established in 2004 to recognize those who have rendered distinguished service to the island of Guam, her people, and her guests.

It was in in the 1960s that Sy first visited Guam and invested in the Guam Hilton Hotel. He next put some money in the Agana Shopping Center, but it took almost 20 years before he decided to branch out SM there. As usual, the one-stop store brought its policy of promoting Philippine products and stocked its shelves with RP-made goods and goodies.

The hottest sellers in the snacks section? Oishi's Pillows, according to an SM executive.

Hollywood hotties

Brit soccer idol **David Beckham** and his wife, former Spice Girl **Victoria "Posh Spice" Adams**, dubbed "Posh and Becks" by the British media, are making celebrity gazers in Lala-Land all agog. Beckham will be playing for the soccer team Los Angeles Galaxy soon.

The gorgeous soccer star and his trend-setting wife are expected to fill the void left by partners **Angelina Jolie** and **Brad Pitt** and couple **Tom Cruise** and **Katie Holmes**, who have been hiding from the paparazzi and are more focused on raising their kids.

SUNDAY/C4

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MT. BANAHAW stands about 8,000 feet above sea level.

Mythical Mt. Banahaw

By Pablo A. Trozado
Contributor

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THE town of Majayjay in Laguna without Mt. Banahaw.

Standing about 8,000 feet above sea level, the mountain serves as a marvelous backdrop to the town, like a classic mural. Once upon a time, Mt. Banahaw was a volcano. But after a single eruption, it fell into a deep sleep from which it has yet to waken. Craters left by the eruption became springs that now feed a cluster of beautiful waterfalls.

Mt. Banahaw seems to prove what scientists say about mountains influencing atmospheric conditions. In Majayjay, the rainy season sometimes last until April, the peak of the dry season in most of the Philippines.

Sta. Cruz, Laguna's capital town, may be sweltering but it will be raining hard in Majayjay. This is why town residents laughingly regard themselves as under a *batalan*, the traditional Filipino kitchen washing area.

Summer rain in Majayjay is quite an experience. First, the sky above Mt. Banahaw turns inky black even if it is a bright day. Then, a drizzle becomes a full-fledged downpour lasting only about an hour.

Disappearing waterfalls

After the rain, the fog covering the mountain clears, revealing two waterfalls cascading side by side. These waterfalls do not remain visible for long. They gradually disappear, and are totally gone from sight just a short time later.

Majayjay has never had the devastating flash floods that have claimed lives in other places situated at the foot of a mountain. This may be because Mt. Banahaw still has lush rainforests where wild orchids grow on trees, and wild animals like deer and wild boars that are easily spotted.

What keeps Mt. Banahaw relatively untouched is not any manmade law on the preservation of wildlife. Actually, there is no serious effort to protect the mountain, not even a municipal ordinance.

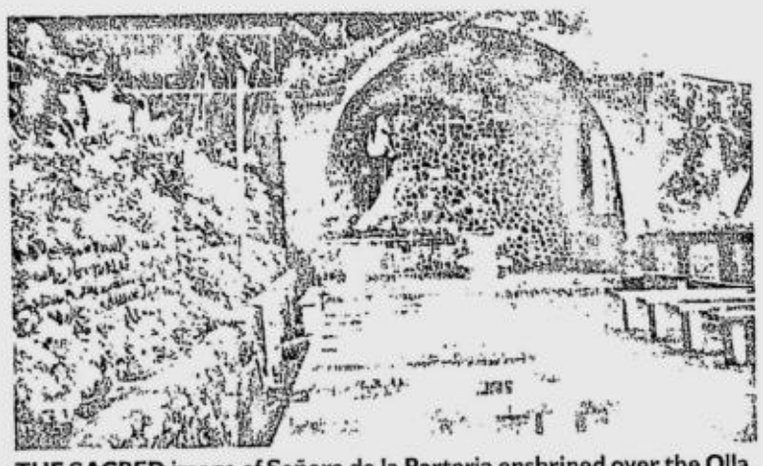
Majayjay Mayor Tino Rodillas admits that protecting the mountain has never been in his agenda since he assumed office in 2001.

Apparently what keeps the mountain safe are the legends handed down through generations.

"People are just scared because Mt. Banahaw [punishes those who mess with its] wildlife," says an old man living in a foothill barangay. He recalls stories about how the mountain "defended" itself to back up his claim.

Unexplained incidents

In 1983, a man reportedly died in Mt. Banahaw while hunting wild pigs using home-made explosives called *patangkab*. His brother-in-law, who accompanied him and was wounded, said while they were eating, one of the explosives rolled out of their bags and, after bumping against a tin can, exploded right in front of the other man, killing him instantly.



THE SACRED image of Señora de la Porteria enshrined over the Olla River at the Western Foothill of Mt. Banahaw

SCIENTIFICALLY named Aerides Quinquevulnera, this orchid that has almost solid purple blooms grows largely on Mt. Banahaw.

What keeps the mountain safe from destruction by humans may be the legends handed down through generations

Another man disappeared in the mountain while gathering rattan. After days of searching, he was found in a gully talking incoherently. When he recovered, he said a haze had covered his location, making it difficult for him to find his way until he passed out from exhaustion.

Rodillas, during his first term, had to change the layout of his feeder road project for a barangay at the foot of Mt. Banahaw because the bulldozer always broke down when it moved in a particular direction. Once the equipment was moved to another side, it ran without a problem.

TO APPRECIATE Mt. Banahaw better, one has to go up the mountain.

At the eastern part of Mt. Banahaw is Dagat-dagatan, an area considered holy. It is said that one should not misbehave in this place or he/she will face danger. A medical student was reported to have fallen into the water and almost drowned when he attempted to pick an orchid beside a waterfall.

Mang Tirioy Granada, a retired Manila employee, talks about a magic vine growing near Dagat-dagatan. He says the magic vine, whose bud has a cross mark, makes the bearer irresistible to women.

Whether or not people believe the myths about Mt. Banahaw, the fact is there has not been any report of illegal logging in the area. Previous attempts had failed, and the people who did them reportedly were never seen again.

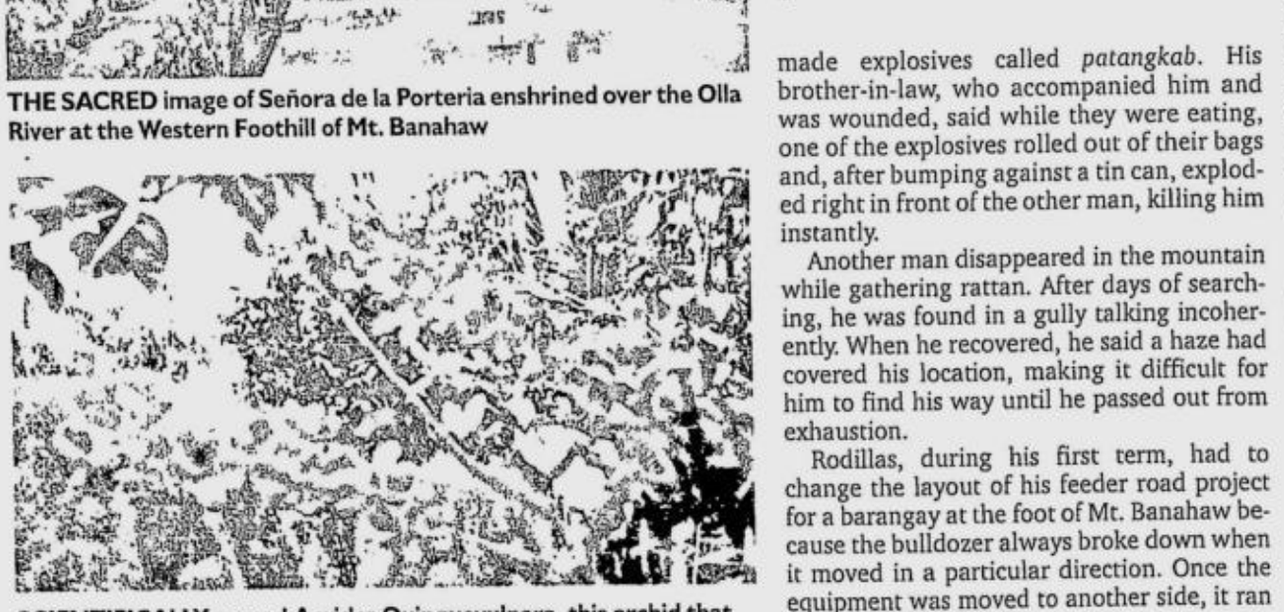
Two-day journey

To appreciate Mt. Banahaw better, one has to go up the mountain. The journey takes two days and, toward the end, at about 1,000 feet to the summit, the terrain becomes difficult. You have to clamber up boulders and take extra care not to trigger an avalanche of stones.

The summit of Mt Banahaw is an expanse of green grass with some cypress trees. Though one hears the sound of running water, no river or any other body of water can be seen at the top. This seems to confirm the belief of old Majayjay residents in an underground lake.

Mt. Banahaw has five waterfalls, but only one, the Majayjay Falls Resort, is accessible by road. Visitors are advised to bring their own provisions, tents and flashlights.

It takes 15 minutes to drive to Majayjay Falls Resort from the *poblacion*. Along the way, visitors can visit the Shrine of Virgin Mary located over the Olla River at the entrance of the town.



MAJAYJAY Falls at the eastern foot of Mt. Banahaw

TRAVELBRIEFS

Higher than average rating

Oakwood Premier Ayala Center in Makati City has posted an above-industry average occupancy rate of 70 percent. Hotel executives attribute this performance to the property's plush appointments and high-service standards, as well as central location. Oakwood is within walking distance of top multinational and largest Philippine corporations. During the year, the property registered a guest-satisfaction rating of 85.27 percent in a periodic survey of Oakwood properties worldwide. Call 7298888 ext. 8200 or e-mail sales@oakwood.com.ph.

European religious pilgrimage

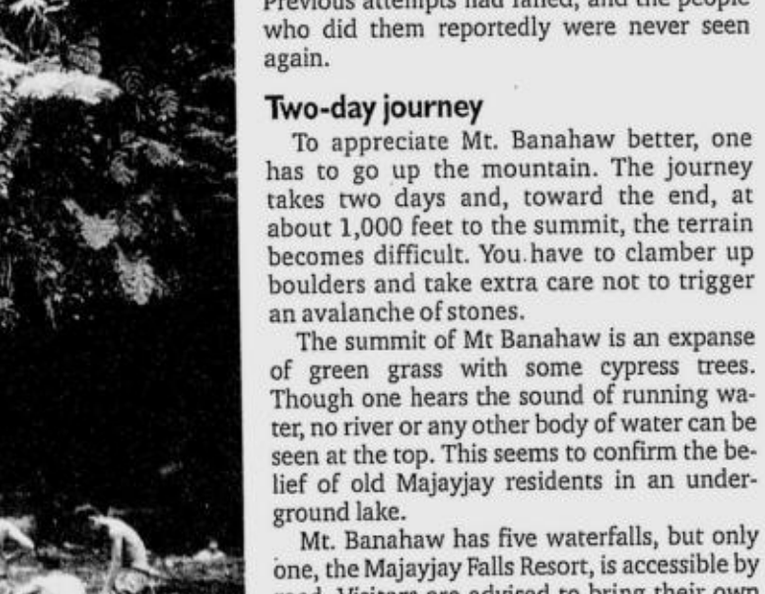
Author Visitacion "Chit" de la Torre is organizing a pilgrimage to some religious sites in Europe. Included in the itinerary are Fatima and Santarem, Portugal. In Spain, the trip will include Santiago de Compostela, Avila, Madrid and Valencia. Also to be visited in the same country are Montserrat, Barcelona and Zaragoza. The group moves to Lourdes, France; then Nice, Genoa, Pisa and Assisi in Italy.
The pilgrimage ends in Rome where participants will have a chance to see Pope Benedict XVI at St. Peter's Square. Call 8154938 or 8156925; or e-mail chitdelatorre@yahoo.com.

A thousand choices

Emirates travelers this January can look forward to over 1,100 entertainment choices onboard all aircraft equipped with Emirates' in-flight entertainment system, ICE. Offered on 600 channels, choices include video and audio on-demand, over 40 interactive games, satellite telephone, short-messaging service and e-mail, live BBC news headlines, an airshow moving map, and external cameras for a bird's eye view of the journey. Emirates aircraft equipped with the TV and Radio Entertainment System now also offers more new films each month. This year, Emirates won for the second year the Best Inflight Entertainment at the 2006 World Airline Awards by Skytrax.

Hotel offers prom package

The Bellevue Hotel has a Prom Package designed to make organizing this traditional school event hassle-free. Organizers can have any party theme they want—from the roaring '20s party to a fairytale ball at the Grand Ballroom. The package includes sit-down or buffet dinner, mobile disco, table and buffet centerpieces, one round of iced tea, guestbook and pen, and a gift certificate for an overnight stay in a deluxe room with breakfast for two. Different set or buffet menus are available from a minimum of 100 to a maximum of 500 persons. Call 7718181.



OAKWOOD unit offers a living area as well as a full kitchen and dining facilities.

STO. NIÑO de Providencia has been shedding oil since Jan. 27, 1992. At left, "Nombre," patron of Congregacion del Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

Tuguegarao university is 100 years old

DR. SHAMON ABRAHAM IS A product of St. Paul University Philippines (SPUP) in Tuguegarao.

A member of the elementary class of 1969, Dr. Shamon and his classmates were taught the Paulinian pledge: "I pledge to be a Paulinian, steeped in the tradition of my Catholic faith, trained and led by gentle loving hands to be another Mary; walking through life, bringing peace and joy and love as I walk among my people for my country and my God."

Dr. Shamon, vice president of the SPUP Alumni Association, is helping organize activities with classmate Belen Barias Lim (GS '69 and HS '73), alumni association president, for the school's 100th anniversary.

SPUP will hold its centennial celebration Jan. 20-26 with the theme "100 Years of Life and Mission." Please call Sr. Marie Marcelle Navarro, SPC, for information at (078) 8441863; Dr. Edith Pagulayan, 0918-5686657; and Belen Lim, (078) 8441507 or 0917-5780195.

First in Cagayan

Established by the St. Paul of Chartres Sisters in 1907, SPUP, the first Catholic school in the Cagayan Valley, has a student population of 6,876.

Sr. Remy Angela Junio, SPUP president, says the start of the celebration will be marked by religious, socio-cultural, civic, sports, and academic activities to generate awareness of and love for quality and Catholic education not just in Cagayan Valley but the whole Philippines.

Thanksgiving

Msgr. Philip Ocol will celebrate the Thanksgiving Mass honoring Sto. Niño de Providencia Jan. 27, 10 a.m., at the chapel on Pijuan St., BF Resort Village, Las Piñas.

The devotion to the Child Jesus under this title in the Philippines is 15 years old.

Devotees will bring the miraculous image to Mary Mother of the Church Parish in a motorcade at 2:30 p.m. for a concelebrated Mass at 3 p.m.

Expected to concelebrate the Mass are Benedictine Fr. Pio Lumibao, Fr. Basil Apostol; Fr. Aloy Navarro and Fr. Fred Reyes, SVD; Fr. Romy Mendoza of Cuenca, Batangas; Fr. Joseph-Sau and Fr. Romy Fedillaga.

Devotion

In his research, John Erwin Enriquez, a member of the Congregacion del Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus, found that several saints were devoted to the Child Jesus. While on earth, they lived their lives according to His virtues.

Foremost of these 39 or so saints was St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus and husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When St. John the Baptist was in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, he leaped with joy when he heard the voice of Mary. He was the first to recognize the Baby Jesus, who was still in Mary's womb.

Saints Melchor, Gaspar and Balthazar, the Holy Magi from the East, offered gifts affirming Jesus' kingship (gold), eternal priesthood (incense) and role as savior of the world (myrrh).

The first saints of the savior were the Holy Innocents who were killed by Herod the Great. Their feast day of Los Innocentes is on Dec. 28.

In the Fiesta del Sto. Niño exhibit opening Jan. 18, 5 p.m., at the PNB Financial Center, images of saints devoted to the Infant Jesus will be displayed. Exhibit is open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. A Novena Mass will be held at 7 p.m.

Other saints devoted to the Infant Jesus include St. Teresa de Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Joseph of Cupertino, St. Rose of Lima, St. Therese of the Child Jesus who referred to herself as the "ball of the Infant Jesus," and St. Faustina of Kowalska who wrote in her diaries that she could see the Child Jesus during Mass, instead of the Consecrated Host.

Virgin of the Poor

The Parokya ng Ina ng mga Dukha in FB Tenement, Western Bicutan, Taguig, held a procession yesterday to honor the first apparition of the Virgin of the Poor to Mariette Beco in Banneux, Belgium.

Today, at 9 a.m., Pasig Bishop Francisco San Diego will officiate at the Concelebrated Mass.

The parish was consecrated in 1993 by his Eminence, Jaime Cardinal Sin. Fr. Nicardo Blanquisco was the first parish priest. In 1999, Mr. and Ms Ludovic Raemarkers of Antwerp, Belgium, donated and personally delivered the first 1.35-meter statue of the Virgin of the Poor.

A second statue that arrived in 1999 is brought to different communities in the parish. Fr. Sim Roxas is the present parish priest (tel. 8242417).

Monastery

The St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mt. Moses, bordering Egypt and the Holy Land, has been declared World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

It is the oldest working Christian monastery with the largest collection of the world's earliest manuscripts, second only to the Vatican library. Its main claim to fame, however, is that it was the site of the Burning Bush where God spoke to Moses.

The Chapel of the Burning Bush was built by Empress Helen, mother of Constantine the Great, in the monastery built by Emperor Justinian.

St. Catherine's body was reportedly carried away by angels. Her remains were discovered 500 years later at the peak that now bears her name. Her relics are kept in the basilica.

Mt. Moses is the starting point for the climb up, so pilgrims can have a panoramic view. It is part of the pilgrimage to Egypt, Jordan and the Holy Land leaving Feb. 25. Call 5211638 or text 0918-9083676.

Radio show

The popular "St. Expeditus" radio program on Radio Veritas, 846 AM Band, has been moved 7-8 p.m., Jan. 21, third Sunday. Presented by the Society of St. Expeditus, the program is anchored by this author. Ofelia Poblete alternates as co-anchor with Dr. Cora Santiago. Fr. Diwane Cacao will do "healing on the air" and Tony Medina will give the "breaking news."

EMILY'S POST
Emily Marcelo

Is the feeling really mutual?

DEAR EMILY,

I've had this relationship for almost a year. He has been a friend since high school.

But after eight years, I saw him again only last year. We were able to open up to each other about our feelings, and realized we felt the same way about each other all this time.

The problem is we're both married!

I've been married for three years, no kids. His marriage is going on seven and he has two kids.

My husband is an overseas Filipino worker and has been away almost two years.

When I started this relationship, I suddenly lost interest in my husband and we gradually lost touch with each other. Then last month we filed for the annulment of our marriage. My husband said he had become a Muslim.

I really love my friend and am willing to be with him. But he said he could not leave his kids. He told me he loved me, and I could feel it, but he couldn't leave his family because of the kids.

I don't think it's a valid reason. He also told me that he still had feelings for his wife.

Does it really happen in real life that a person can have two loves at the same time? As far as I know, when you have found another love, your feelings for the first love will lessen.

I experienced that with my husband.

SHAWIE

He is guapple while you are all apple! You may have a part of him but, clearly, not all of him!

It is easier for you to break up with your OFW husband because there is not a lot of cement holding you two together. He is far away and you have not had enough history in this marriage to withstand a typhoon like loneliness.

Your boyfriend has three solid posts holding him back plus that X-factor that he truly loves his family.

What is happening here is your boyfriend did not hear cymbals and drums when he met you again. If he did, you would not be writing this letter and having this problem.

He would have swept you off your feet without a thought for the whole wide world. He would not be giving you a song-and-dance about not being able to leave his two kids and a wife that he confessed he still loved.

A year ago, you may have met in an emotion-laden setting, and were overcome with your "confessions" of "a puppy love that never faded." This could have been true for you... but for him? He saw a gift of an affair and he grabbed it! Hey, he is human!

Unless you are willing to relegate yourself to being just a full-time girlfriend with no privileges except occasionally sharing your bed and once in a while getting away when he is able to make up excuses to his family, then go ahead and make the most of this nail-biting, high-tension, guilt-ridden relationship.

To your question, "Can a person have two loves at the same time?" the answer is, of course.

One has to be first among equals. In this case, the wife is unknowingly secure in her starring role while the other, well... that would be you.

And while you are about to waste time and money for an annulment just to take up the role of a once-in-a-while diversion/entertainment facility for this guy, take note that you already have an inkling of what is going on. Uhmmm... get the picture?

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER. Listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.

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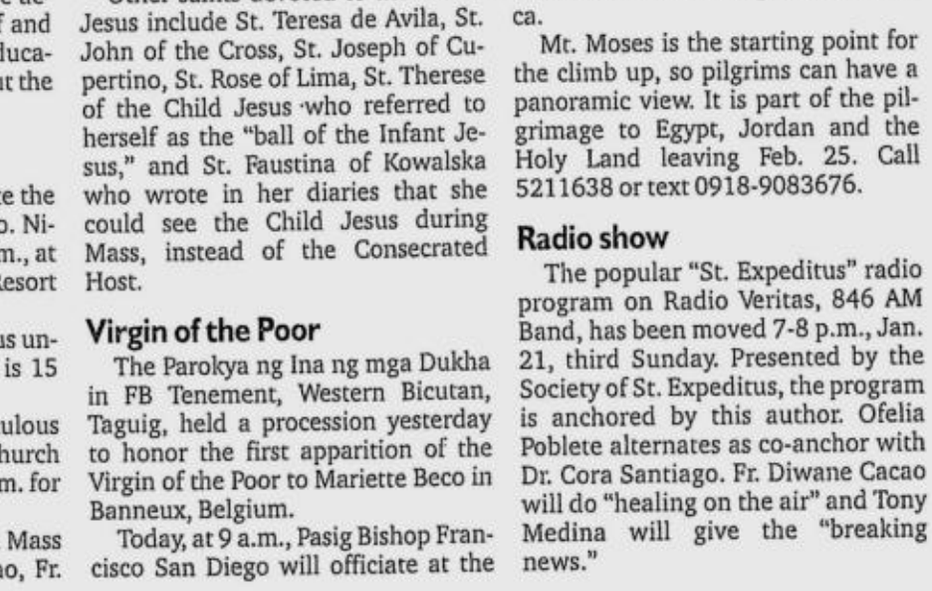
Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0196 series of 2007

Bridal fair at new events venue

CHU-U-YEN EVENTS WILL hold a bridal fair soon at 1 Esplanade, the new events venue at the Reclamation Area. With the theme "Romancing the Bay," the fair will showcase some of the top names in the wedding industry such as Hizon's Catering, invitation maker Printrade Society Printers, wedding ring maker Celestial Artistry, fireworks expert Dragon Fireworks, photo and video specialists, gown designers, bakers, florists, wine sellers, souvenir makers, travel agents, musicians, stylists and coordinators. Call 0919-6810600. Engaged couples can register online at www.chu-u-yen.com.



BRIDAL exhibit at Mall of Asia

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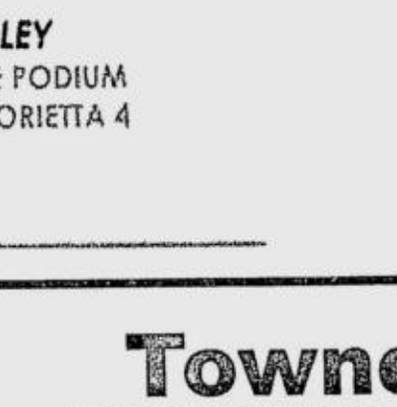

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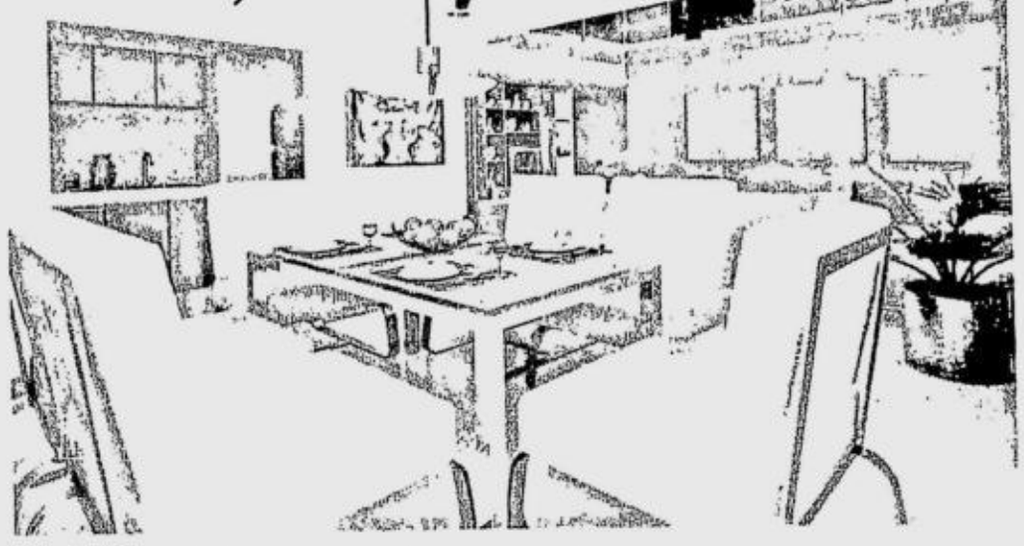

CONTEMPORARY 3-bedroom loft at Grand Soho Makati

CENTURY PROPERTIES INC. BREAKS NEW ground in its joint venture project with UCPB, the magnificent 40-story residential condominium that is Grand Soho Makati.

GSM comes from the same visionaries behind Asia's "best residential condominium," Essensa East Forbes (according to Asiaweek). Combining the three integral components of a high-rise haven—location, luxury and affordability, GSM is an ideal place for local and foreign investors, entrepreneurs and multinational companies.

Situated within Ayala's Golden Triangle, GSM's prime location (at the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, formerly Buendia, and Dela Costa Avenue) gives residents full access to the fast-paced Makati lifestyle. Schools, churches, banks, embassies and the Metro Rail Transit station are just a few minutes away.

Grand Soho Makati fuses the comfort of home with the security, facilities and convenience of modern living. While the concierge service, THX viewing room, spa, function room, fitness center and library are only a few of the amenities that residents can delight in, the main attractions are, of course, its luxurious units. Choose from studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom configurations or indulge in the chic sky lofts perched on a unique level on the ninth floor, which also contains the sundeck and infinity pool.

In an effort to make purchasing a unit and moving in a hassle-free and time-saving experience, Century Properties has pioneered the "fully furnished, fully fitted" concept for all its condo units. Furnishings such as the refrigerator, microwave oven, stove top, dining table and chairs, sofa, coffee table, 21-inch Sony flat-screen TV and DVD player all come at zero cost and are ready for use. In addition, GSM offers three new design options: Modern, Sleek and Contemporary (each with its own dark, light or combination theme).

Compared to its competitors, GSM also gives its buyers optimal value for their hard-earned money (priced up to 43 percent cheaper than other similar developments) without VAT, documentary stamps and transfer fees, with rates as low as P12,000 per month.

Call 8189025, 8937050, 0915-7002000, or visit www.gsmcondo.com. Check out GSM's model units at 2/L, Low-Rise Pacific Star Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City.

Sunday sizzlers

From page C1

According to news reports, Victoria had gone house-hunting as early as last summer in the Malibu and Bel-Air areas. As for Beckham, good looks have not stopped him from running a serious soccer academy for LA's young players.

Paparazzi can hardly wait, and celeb glossies are thinking of beefing up their staff. Time to retire **Britney Spears** and **Paris Hilton**.

Not for time-sharing

Some people who bought time shares in certain resorts are finding it difficult to enjoy their investments. The projects, of course, were pre-sold before construction, but, in some instances, developers were overcome by hard times and so the units promised were never completed.

In some places, as in Boracay, the developers have sold portions of their property to resort operators and have left their time-sharers competing for only a few rooms.

A designer we know has been waiting to enjoy his vacation place for years now. Not once has he succeeding in getting a turn at staying in the unit he paid to "share" with others. And the company has been mum about refunding his useless investment.

Not even the exhilarating Boracay breeze can cover the odor of fraud here. Is there a government agency who can come to the rescue?

In his fashion

His blood pressure shot up so he had to be hospitalized. But where did his friends find him when they came a-visiting? In the bathroom, smoking!

You'd think, given that he is at the top of his game and he is one of the moving forces in his field, he'd take better care of his health. Apparently, he thought otherwise.

After he checked out of the hospital, he threw a big bash and, some say, lived it up. Other reports said he was just wanted to party because, well, life is short. Yes, it is, and the path to the bar even shorter.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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NEW! Mr. Muscle
Mr. Muscle®
THE SCIENCE OF TOUGH CLEANING®
DRAIN DECLOGGER
Mr. Muscle Drain Declogger lang ang may unique thick gel formula na kayang lumusot sa lababong puno ng tubig. Non-corrosive pa kaya safe sa lahat ng klase ng drains, tubo at lababo. Sa Mr. Muscle Drain Declogger, lusot ang problema!
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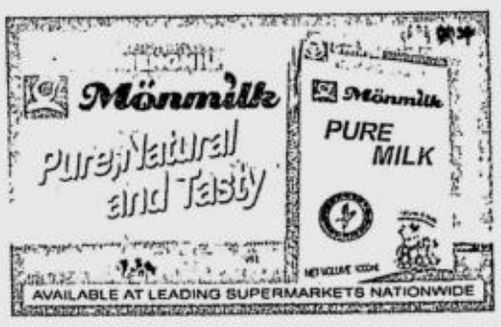
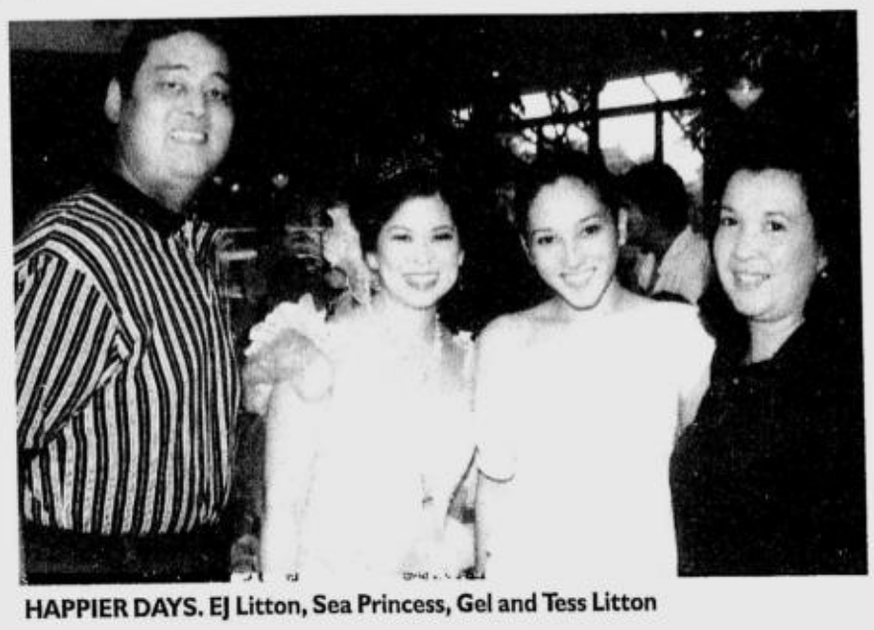


NEWLYWEDS Joysie and Ruey de Vera

PROUD parents Ernesto and Josie Rufino

Although born a decade apart, EJ Litton and Joel Tantoco moved in similar social circles and were loved and admired by so many people



HAPPIER DAYS. EJ Litton, Sea Princess, Gel and Tess Litton

Life, love and death

TESSA!

Tessa Prieto Valdes

HEAVEN RECENTLY RE-ceived two young gentlemen who will surely rock the heavenly skies. Although born a decade apart, both moved in similar social circles and were loved and admired by so many people.

If there was an extremely original way in which to leave this world, my cousin, **Ernest John "E.J." Litton,** knew it. His two-year battle with the Big C ended last Sunday, the birthday of his beloved wife **Tess.** E.J. knew how to reach all the folks who had touched his life, giving them all ample time to bid him farewell.

With all the advancements in medical technology and high-speed communications, E.J.'s critical conditions were going into uncharted territories and were simultaneously reported via text. I admittedly "killed" him several times by forwarding texts of his un-

LIFE/ D3

Presyong Pinoy

555 *Spanish Sardines*

Lasapin ang nakakaganang sarap-anghang ng 555 Spanish Sardines... tinimplahan ng piling-piling spices na nanunuot ang linamnam sa bawat isda. Isang selebrasyon ng katakam-takam na lutong ala Español sa presyong abot-kaya ng Pinoy!

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BERNARDO-GALLAGA NUPTIALS

Ah, young and pure love

NEWLYWEDS
Victor and Lisa Bernardo (nèe Gallaga)

The wedding recently radiated so much positive energy that could only come from the young

WITH President Macapagal-Arroyo; father of the bride Aru Gallaga (left); and parents of the groom Ambassador Joseph and Conchitina Bernardo

VICTOR BERNARDO IS THE youngest son of Ambassador Joseph "Lani" Bernardo, Philippine Ambassador to the Kingdom Spain, and Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo. He fell in love with Lisa Gallaga, daughter of Aru Gallaga and the late Nena Ibazeta.

She is a wholesome young woman, a school teacher who specializes in teaching toddlers. This she does daily in the school run by her and her friends called, precisely that, Toddlers. Victor works with the insurance firm Mercer's.

Their wedding recently radiated so much positive energy that could only come from young, pure love that the couple projected. There was consensus among guests that it was a beautiful affair because it was done with so much affection and caring.

The church and bridal entourage were decked with liliums, orchids and cymbidiums. There was varied foliage of green which cooled the warm afternoon near the sea.

The altar was simple and elegant with huge green planters wrapped with tulle. The decor was crafted by florist Jun Hen.

The mass was celebrated by the Bernardos' long-time friend, Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan of Tuguegarao, who recounted how he saw the groom grow form an infant to a young man.

The bride was radiant in a beautiful gown by Pitoy Moreno of fine Chantilly lace and a long sweeping train which was dramatic and inspiring. For headdress, the young bride wore the same diamond piece her mother-in-law wore in her own wedding 40 years ago.

Principal sponsors included President Macapagal-Arroyo, Nene Quimson, Victoria Zubiri, Marybeth de Leon, Sylvia Ibazeta, Ma. Isabel Michilakis and Vida Estrella.

Male sponsors included Speaker Jose de Venecia, Carlos Araneta, Ambassador Roberto Romulo, Ambassador Albert del Rosario, Renato de Castro and Federico Galang.

WITH Nene Quimson and Sen. Edgardo Angara

The sunset reception organized by family friend Marichelle Ligon of Bride's Maids and Company was held at the Coconut Palace.

Florist Jun executed Zen-inspired centerpieces while the newlyweds were honored by the best man, Juan Carlos Bernardo, and the maids of honor, San-J Valenton and Nicole Guidotti, whose heartwarming speech brought tears to the bride's eyes.

The bride's father, Aru Gallaga, and the groom's parents, Lani and Conchitina, were beaming with pride as they went around entertaining family and friends.

All in all it was an intimate evening with everyone happy for the love shared by the bride and groom. Vic and Lisa flew to Bangkok and El Nido for their honeymoon.

To Vic and Lisa, our best wishes for a very happy life together.

WITH the principal sponsors

WITH the entourage

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.

GO-ONG

Erickson Lim Go, son of **Lilia Lim Go**, will wed **Lynberry Lim Ong**, daughter of **José** and **Norma Lim Ong**, today, at San Agustin Parish. The bride will wear a **Leonard Co** creation of ecru duchess satin with hand-crushed metallic organza top and a bouffant skirt, with a three-meter cathedral train fully beaded in dainty floral design.

CATIIS-CULION

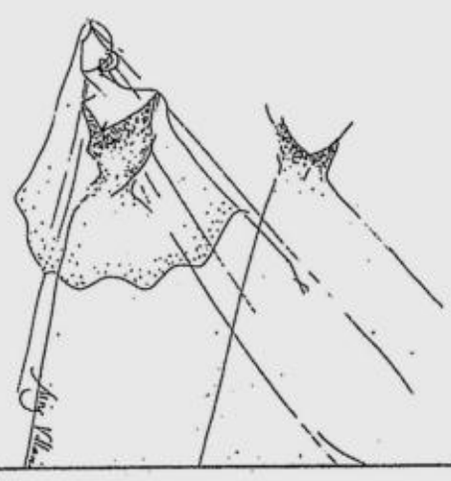
Ronaldo F. Catiis, son of **Reynaldo** and **Remedios Catiis**, will wed **Mary Jean A. Culion**, daughter of **Manuel Culion**, on Jan. 20, at St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church, Mandaluyong. Reception will follow at Jade Valley, QC.

VIDAL-SEVILLA

Francis Vidal, son of **Juanito** and **Milagros Vidal**, will wed **Maria Victoria Sevilla**, daughter of **José** and **Victoria Sevilla**, on Jan. 18, at St. Peter Baptist Parish Church, Candelaria, Quezon.

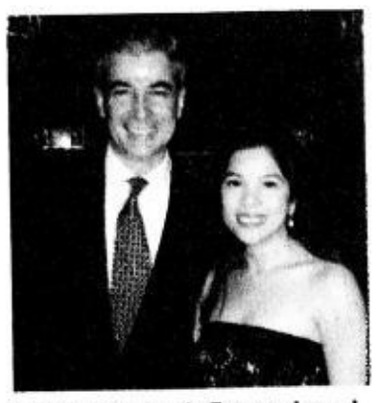
CO-CHUA

Jobert G. Co, son of **Vicente** and **Delia** (deceased) **Co**, will marry **Windee J. Chua**, daughter of **Melencio** and **Elena Chua**, today, at the Basilica of San Sebastian. The bride will wear a **Leonard Co** gown of white metallic organdy with a bouffant peplum skirt and a three-meter train, embroidered with fine floral ferns and beaded with cut-glass crystal, sequins and pearls.



LACSON-SANCHEZ

José Ma. B. Lacson, son of engineer **Carmelo V.** and **Erlinda B. Lacson**, will wed **Elizabeth L. Sanchez**, daughter of engineer **Ruben M.** and **Generosa L. Sanchez**, on Jan. 20, 9:30 a.m., at the Nuestra Señora de Gracia Parish in Guadalupe Viejo, Makati. Reception will follow at the Pavillion A, Wack Wack Golf and Country Club along Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong. The bride will wear an ivory duchess-satin gown embellished with Austrian Swarovski crystals, designed by **Ming Villasis** of Dream Bride Inc.


DASHING couple Fernando and Kit Zobel

ENTERTAINING couple Louie and Cecille Ysmael

HAPPY parents Chiqui and Junior Prieto

GORGEOUS Bianca Zobel and Anton San Diego

NEXT-IN-LINE Kai Prieto and Raj Moreno

EXPECTING parents Pilar and Paolo Lorenzo

Life, love and death

From page D1

timely and, as it turned out, untrue, demise as early as Saturday. In retrospect, it was totally confusing, but triggered more prayers for E.J. and his family.

E.J. was a big man with an equally large and generous heart. His zest for life and laughter matched mine. Whenever I needed anything related to the musical entertainment world, he was the one to call. Many times he would help me enlist bands, get sound systems or simply plan parties at Strumm's.

In any tragedy, we should never fail to focus on the small gifts of grace that emerge. After my late brother **Louie Prieto**'s untimely death 14 years ago, E.J. and I got close as we opened Strumm's, their vision of a total entertainment place with great live music.

Today, countless events and celebrations after, E.J. had become the source—not only for bands, but also for strength and laughter—for so many people. At his funeral, the most beautiful music could be heard, sung from the hearts of close friends like **Rudy Bautista**, one of the pioneers in their "band of brothers."

Death is truly strange. Sometimes, he comes with relative slowness such that there is enough time to prepare emotionally and spiritually for his arrival. At other times, death is the proverbial thief in the night, robbing us of our loved ones instantaneously.

Such was the case with young and dynamic **Joel Tantoco**, who left us with no warning the day after E.J.'s passing. After soul searching and finally coming to peace with God, Joel passed away tragically from *bangungot*.

The scene was all too familiar as an unbelievable outpouring of love and prayers burst forth for this brightly burning candle. At his wake at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart that the Tantoco family helped build, wonderful photo memories of Joel were posted all over on a chill-out Bora display. Joel was indeed a man of cool style and suave charm. He lived a beautiful life surrounded by the love of his family and many friends.

Life can make us experience so many varied emotions that can either crush our spirits or make us soar sky-high with unbelievable joy and contentment. Personally experiencing these emotions makes lasting impressions. Oftentimes, it is only the absence of something that makes us realize its importance.

MARISU and Victor Rufino with cute twins Julia and Audrey

NINANG Alya Honasan and Karla Delgado

EVERLASTING pair Mellie and Paing Hechanova

BATCH '81 classmate Lyra Rufino-Maceda and kids Beanie and little DJ

Big day

On the same day that E.J. passed away, his cousin **Joysie Rufino** had her big wedding day with **Ruel de Vera** at the Santuario de San Antonio Church. During the lovely wedding reception at newly renovated InterContinental Manila, her father **Ernesto Rufino** spoke to the newlyweds, Ruey and Joysie, about how life experiences—good or bad—will bond the couple in strength and happiness.

Their love story is quite interesting, as Joysie was once a student of her husband's at Ateneo de Manila University. The video was quick to clarify that the romance began after the semester was over, but the attraction did start instantly.

Ruey's brilliant talent with the pen was what Joysie, a teacher herself at the Beacon School, fell for. And now, I am so glad to see them start their blissful journey as a wedded couple. According to one of their *ninangs*, **Alya Honasan**, Ruey has been extremely happy and totally eager to tie the knot.

Time does fly by so quickly. Joysie's youngest sister, **Ma-Is Rufino**, was her maid of honor. Ma-Is was one of my flower girls at my wedding 13 years ago! This is the sort of full circles that can make you feel wrinkles sprouting all over your face.

January must be the new June—the choicest month to marry. Another young relative, **Chukri Prieto**, recently wed **Ines Delgado** in a most dramatically lit San Antonio ceremony. Right after the newlyweds exchanged kisses, they marched down the aisle toward their fun reception at the new, elegant ballroom of Manila Peninsula Hotel. It was a nice change not to go through the usual endless photo session.

The father of the groom, **Junior Prieto**, welcomed his new daughter-in-law with a toast, telling her to look forward to an exciting and rocking time with Chukri. From the evening of merriment and dancing until dawn, Ines had a sample of her new happy life ahead.

Wedded bliss

As these couples start married life, generous couple **Paing** and **Mellie Hechanova** just celebrated their 52nd anniversary of wedded bliss. The lovely dinner-and-dance party at the Forbes Pavilion gathered long-time friends who all enjoyed each other's company.

Life inexorably goes on and so do exciting events happening in our city. This coming Saturday, Jan. 20, is the much-awaited concert of multi-awarded, operatic supergroup Il Divo at the PICC Plenary Hall at 8 p.m. Riding on the success of their third album, these four young, hot tenors are not only individually talented but also gorgeous. The concert will surely be a feast for the eyes and ears.

Smart Infinity, in cooperation with Sun Life Financial, Citibank, Rado Watches of Switzerland and Philtown Properties, is the main presentor of Il Divo Live in Manila. By signing up with Smart Infinity Plan 5000, the new subscriber gets rewarded with a Nokia N73 and two VIP tickets to the concert. For inquiries, call 8488889 or get tickets through Ticketworld at 8919999.

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MAID of honor Ma-Is Rufino and Sea Princess

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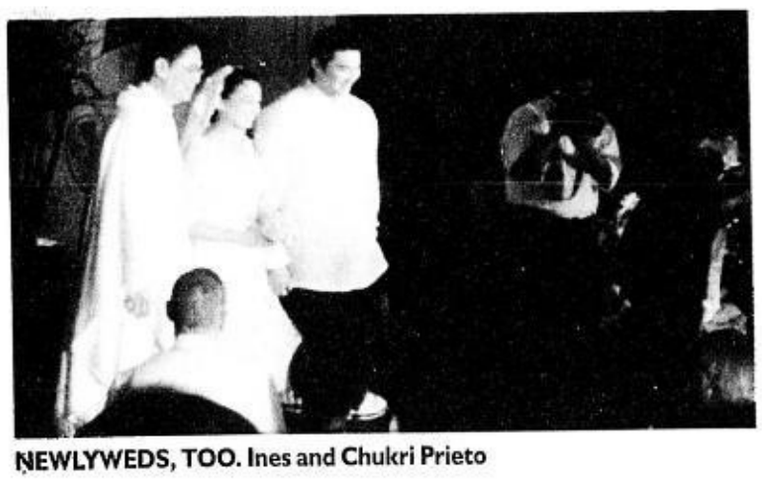
NEWLYWEDS, TOO. Ines and Chukri Prieto

HONORED guests Sir Michael Kadoorie, Helen Delgado, Rose Delgado and Robbie Delgado

A hobby becomes exercise

ANNA Marie Periquet and partner Bernard Artuz during a competition

LYN OLIVA, COMPLIANCE OFFICER OF A leading bank; Maureen Santiago, Capwire Telecommunications EVP and COO; and Anna Marie Periquet, Anna Marie Home Collections president, have found a fun way to de-stress.

The three women are loyal patrons of Bykes Café at the La Fuerza Building on Pasong Tamo in Makati City where they dance regularly.

Oliva says dancing has become both hobby and exercise, something her cardiologist highly recommends for hypertension. A frequent consistent dance sport winner, Oliva makes sure she wears the proper shoes that stay on her feet so she can make the most of her dance workout.

Santiago says dancing helps her relieve stress, and has improved her disposition at work, something her colleagues noticed. She says even if she gets only a four hours of sleep at night, she still has a good day.

Periquet got into social dancing for health reasons but now it has become a passion. She even trained with Edna Ledesma (the only Asian to win in a dance competition in Blackpool, United Kingdom).

With partner Bernard Artuz, Periquet participated recently in the 2006 Dance Sport Council of the Philippines Ranking and Competition, 1st Notions and Motions Dance Sport Competition, and the Bykes Competition.

Having been to other dancing venues, the three women found they preferred Bykes for many reasons. Santiago says she likes the "feel" of Bykes. She finds it more sophisticated, a notch higher than the others.

She says the staff is always looking out for clients and really go out of their way to make sure their needs are taken care of.

She finds the environment at Bykes extremely comfortable and a number of regulars have become like family. Many women, she notes, go to Bykes alone.

Periquet likes the place's clean, cozy interiors. Saying she is proud to be seen at Bykes, Periquet describes its clientele as "the best crowd: young, very hip, and shows their good breeding."

After a while, she says a patron becomes friends with the other clients, and eventually they start feeling like members of one big family.

Oliva agrees that management takes very good care of its patrons. Recently, the café launched its Bykes membership card. With the card, members never have to worry about the minimum consumable cover charge again. The unified Bykes membership policy lets patrons avail of the services and facilities of both Lounge and Dance Studio.

In April clients even have a chance to win a 2006 Mazda 3 sedan.

Oliva adds that the band is good a and the dance floor big. Bykes, she says, has a very good crowd and a pleasant ambiance that her family does not mind in the least if she spends a couple of days a week in the place.

Even if only to polish her dance movements, Santiago does not miss her regular days at Bykes. Keeping fit while having fun is, of course, a bonus.

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30 years of runaway success

NESTLÉ VP for marketing promotions and events Joey Quimbo, Nestlé AVP and consumer marketing manager for Milo Michelle Calo-Alvarillo, and Milo brand champion Robby Afzelius

IT WAS A DAY OF SURPRISES AND the unexpected as the 30th National Milo Marathon in Manila came to a close, giving marathon enthusiasts, families and everyone involved plenty of reasons to celebrate yet another highly successful edition of the country's longest and most prestigious running competition.

Despite the rains brought by typhoon "Seniang," marathon enthusiasts and their families attended the event.

Nestlé Philippines chair and CEO Nandu Nandkishore said the marathon remained the premier event for people who wanted to be runners of distinction. Over 184,000 took part in the 30 legs of this year's marathon, exceeding the 182,000 target.

Also at the finals were Nestlé's SVP and business executive manager for beverages Eugene David, marketing promotions and events vice president Joey Quimbo, AVP and consumer marketing manager for Milo Michelle Calo-Alvarillo, and sports events executive Pat Goc-ong.

THE 30TH National Milo Marathon champions Julius Sermona and Jho-an Banayag with Nestlé SVP and business executive manager Eugene David (right) and Milo sports event executive Pat Goc-ong

Procter and Gamble Philippines president and CEO James Lafferty ran with his wife Susan and children Kirsten and John Patrick.

In the men's 42K division, Julius Sermona from Bacolod grabbed first place. It was only the second time he completed a marathon.

Jho-an Banayag successfully defended her title in the women's division, her time of two hours, 48 minutes and 16 seconds setting a new record.

Both winners will compete in next year's Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

Participants included twin brothers Alexandro and Alexander Delima who have joined the event since its inception.

Craig Logan, an American missionary from North Carolina, ran the 10K race for the first time pushing the wheelchair of adopted son Justin.

Sidelight of the event was the cheerdance competition won by Bayanan Elementary School in the elementary division and the University of Makati Pep Squad in the high school/college division.

Valenzuela National High School received the Biggest School Delegation Award.

PROCTER and Gamble Philippines president and CEO James Lafferty with son John Patrick, wife Susan and daughter Kirsten

EUGENE David (right) with wife Sheila and son Kyle

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Ikebana seminar

A FIVE-DAY COURSE ON VARIOUS flower arrangement techniques will be conducted Jan. 24-28, 1-6 p.m., by Ikebana professor Serapion S. Metilla. This will be held at Metts Plant Arts, King Louis Garden Center, Manila Seedling Bank (MBS), corner Edsa and Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Topics are: Day 1—Ikebana, Moribana and Shoka styles, with hands-on; Day 2—Western style: all-around or one-sided and L-shaped; Day 3—Western style: crescent-shaped and Hogarth line, and flower shop operation; Day 4—freestyle, buffet or party centerpieces, and garland-making; Day 5—corsage-making, bridal bouquet and other wedding arrangements.

A minimal fee will be charged for flower vases, pruning scissors, floral foams, flowers, foliage, ribbons, wires, floral tapes, snacks, handouts and certificate. Persons who register at least five days in advance get a 10-percent discount. Register with Liza Metilla or Rolando de la Cerna at Flower Mart or Edsa Garden House at MBS. Call 9394593, 4352479 or 0917-8321352.

Call center gets 'connected'

GLOBESOLUTIONS WILL PROVIDE MESsageConnect service to ePerformax Contact Centers, an award-winning call center in the Philippines and the United States.

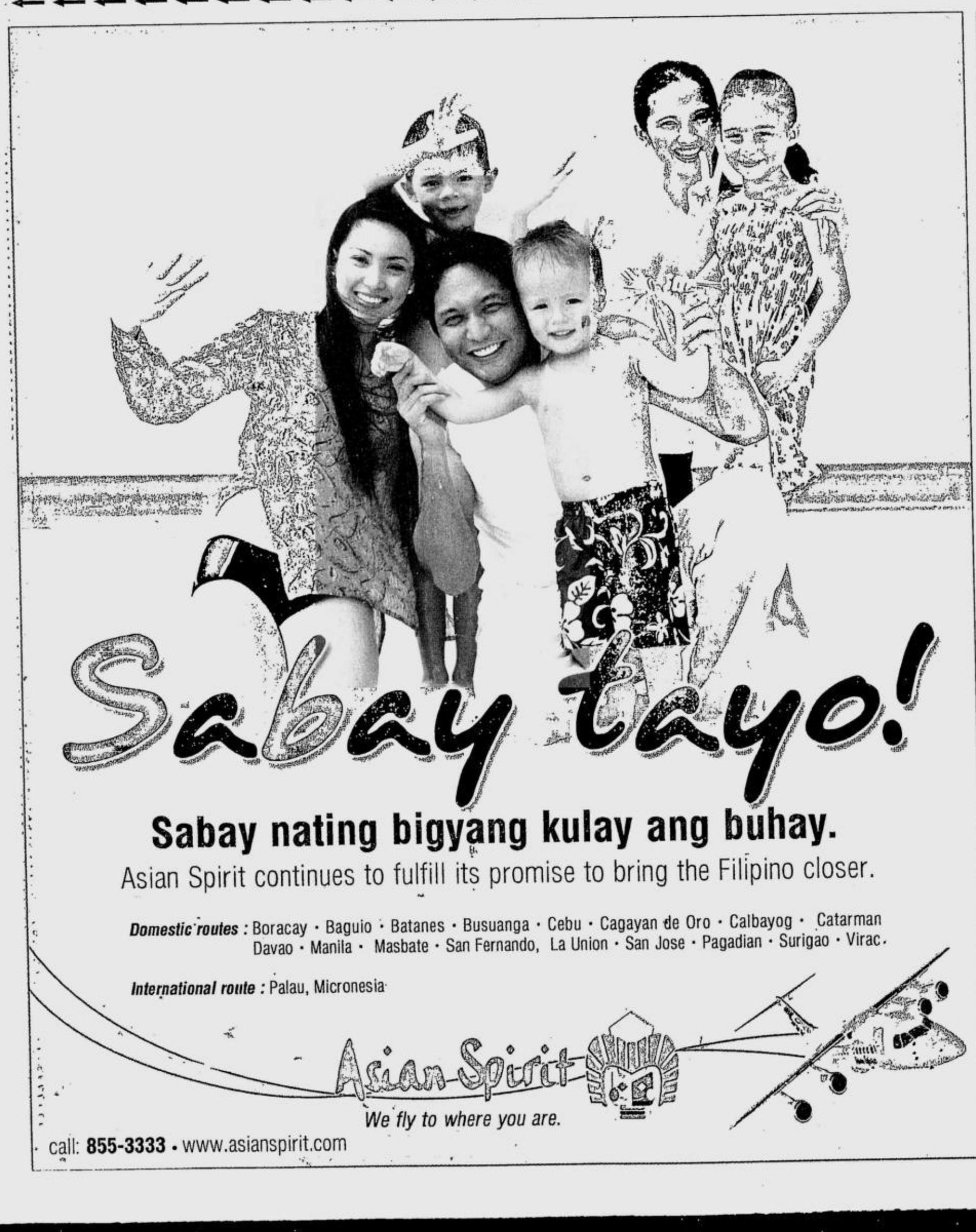
GlobeSolutions is the corporate wireless business group of Globe Telecom and Innove Communications.

With MessageConnect, enterprises can send or broadcast up-to-date and reliable data to employees and clients via SMS (short message service) and MMS (multimedia message service).

Companies are able to reach quickly and directly their staff and customers, with messages sent in real time or on a set schedule. It even allows polls, mini-campaigns and various business processes.

The service is expected to let ePerformax provide value-added messaging services to its Metro Manila workforce. The company will use the service to conduct instant surveys and track attendance.

MessageConnect can be a tool for recruitment to update applicants on their interview and exam schedules, as well as their status. This service can also be used for company updates, including human resource information.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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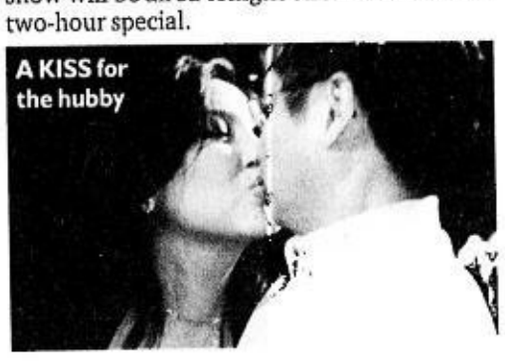
Wind beneath her wings

ABS-CBN'S BIGGEST STARS (JUDY Ann Santos, Ryan Agoncillo, Sam Milby, Piolo Pascual) and bosses (Gabby Lopez, Charo Santos, Cory Vidanes) were there, but Megastar Sharon Cuneta's eyes were firmly set on her family the night she marked her big 4-1 at the Big Dome.

Highlights of the annual love fest were Mega's teary duet of "Wind Beneath My Wings" with daughter KC Concepcion and the onstage cameos of babies Frankie and Miel Pangilinan.

To cap the evening, Sharon serenaded her husband, Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan with her signature ballad, "Ikaw." The birthday show will be aired tonight on ABS-CBN 2 as a two-hour special.

KC, Sharon and Frankie take center stage; Miel, inset, watches intently from her seat in the audience.



RODEL ROTONI

ELY BUENDIA signs author's guitar in this file photo dated Dec. 16, 2005. Buendia underwent two heart surgeries in the past week.

A 'hurting' Angel takes time off from romance

By Nini Valera

"I'M STILL HURTING," ADMITted Angel Locsin, referring to her recent breakup with boyfriend Oyo Boy Sotto.

Angel, 21, told INQUIRER Entertainment on Sunday that she and Oyo are still trying to save their friendship. "We started as friends," she said. "We want to remain friends."

The actress, who is cast opposite Robin Padilla in the new GMA 7 action-adventure series, "Asian Treasures," said she needed to focus on work to heal.

"It's time-off for personal relationships," she said, debunking rumors that Robin is taking Oyo's place.

"We're only friends," she insisted. "I apologize to Robin's family—he is being dragged into my personal life. As a friend, I have learned so much from him."

Angel, who did her own stunts in "Darna," will be working on new stunts and fight scenes in "Asian Treasures." Robin is the stunt director and martial arts choreographer for the series.

Looks like their relationship will, in fact, remain on the pro-

A HURTING/ E3

Don't you dare die on us, Ely Buendia

CHEER FACTOR

By Francis Ochoa

WHATEVER you do, Mr. Ely Buendia, don't die on us.

You are a music icon who is as rare as they come. You are a vacant cab with an accommodating driver during the holidays. You are a cop who's actually out to protect the citizenry. You are an honest politician. You are a film fest movie deserving of an award. You are a critically-acclaimed Cueshe hit.

I am a loyal Thomasian; you are the only reason I regret not having studied at the University of the Philippines.

If you go, what does that leave us with? A handful of artistic bands under the radar and Orange and Lemons. We scrounge the city for bars where one plays, and puke when the other's songs go on air.

Always, always

As long as you're around, we will always have Eraserheads. E-Heads. The band. *The* Band.

Forget Pupil. You will always be Eraserheads to me, just as E-Heads can never be reincarnated without you.

You played at 6-underground once with your new band, Pupil. Then for encores, you played two E-heads hits. I still have one of those performances on my cell phone video library, tucked between two sexy clips (that's how much I

DON'T/ E2

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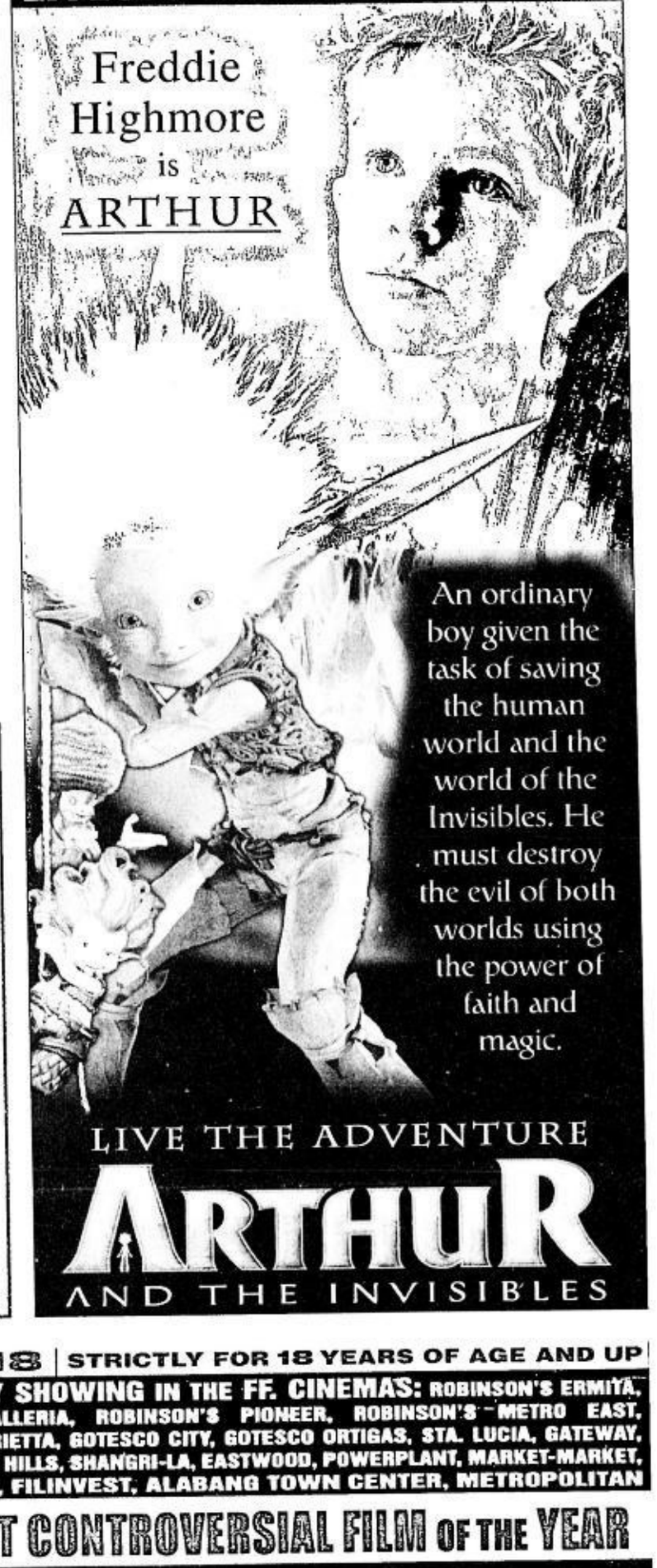

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OPENS JAN. 24

Don't you dare die on us, Ely Buendia

From page E1

idolize you).

Before you, there were Pepe Smith and Mike Hanopol. Smith has had the sense to stay alive—never mind if, physically, he's long been a weeded-out, jail-dried version of his old self—long after you made the E-heads the next great Pinoy rock band after Juan dela Cruz. Hanopol lives on, too. Don't tell me you're planning to die ahead of them?

Die, Ely, and Hale's going to write a tribute song for you. That should jolt your heart back to life.

Don't get me wrong. I would benefit greatly from your death.

Imagine how much my Ibañez acoustic guitar, which I bought for P15,000, would be worth now that it has your signature and the dedication, "Francis, rock and roll!" A friend of mine was willing to purchase it for P20, 000—and you are still alive. And that doesn't include the snapshot of you signing it. Or the notarized affidavit of an INQUIRER employee who overheard you saying it was your first time to affix a signature on a guitar.

Do you hear me? *You. Can't. Die. Yet.* The next definitive band in the local scene hasn't emerged. Your presence helps keep music fans—even idiotic ones like me—patiently waiting.

A heart attack at 36? That's no way for music icons to go. If you were found dead after OD-ing on your drug of choice, I'd probably be more at peace with that. Or maybe if you blew your brains out like Kurt Cobain did.

Or if you were shot, the way John Lennon was, by a maniac—imagine if it was me! Imagine how much my guitar would cost then!

No, Ely, the Philippine music industry needs you. Some say you're past your musical prime, that after struggling to rein yourself (sometimes with the help of Raymund M and the rest of E-heads) from falling into three-chord pop compositions, there's

DON'T/E3

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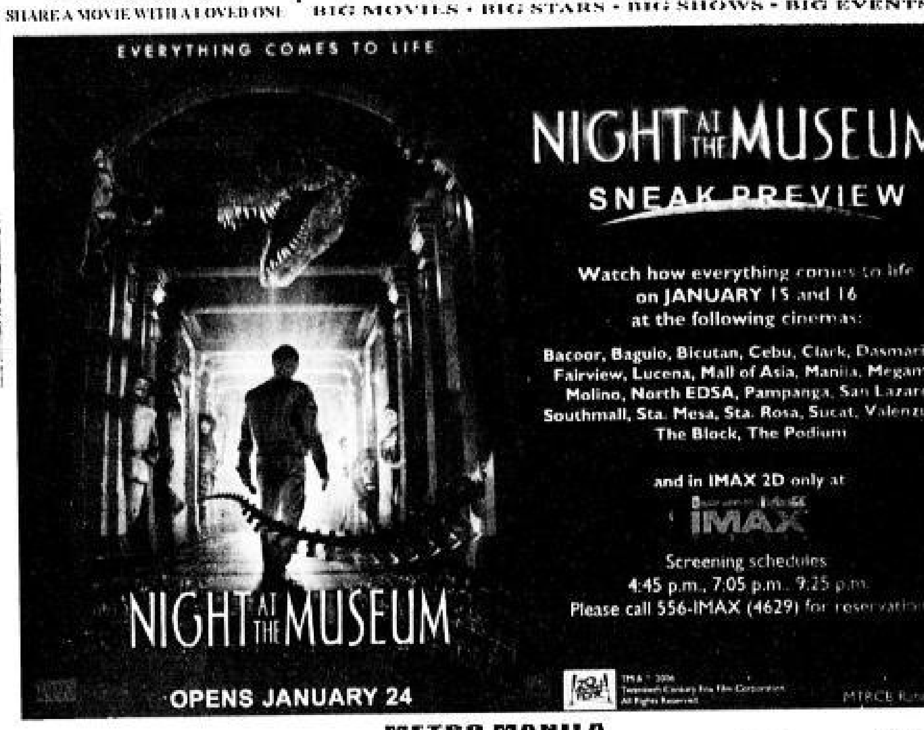

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104

IMAX

T-REX IN 3D
11:45AM 2:15PM 3:00PM 6:00PM
Admission Fee- P50*

SANTA VS THE SNOWMAN
1:00PM 4:45PM
Molinco Fee- P200 Pimalimo Fee- P250

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

PREMIERE CINEMA
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

CENTERSTAGE
ERAGON

THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
BLOOD DIAMOND

CINEMA 2
ERAGON

633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452

1 ERAGON
2 MANO PO 5
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ROB-B-HOOD
7 ERAGON
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
10 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 LIGALIG
7 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
8 MANO PO 5
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
2 MANO PO 5
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 ROB-B-HOOD
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ERAGON
11 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
12 SUPER NOYPI

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
8 LIGALIG
9 MANO PO 5
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 ERAGON
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 MANO PO 5
2 ERAGON
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 ERAGON
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 ERAGON
5 SUPER NOYPI
6 ERAGON
7 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11 MANO PO 5
12 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ERAGON
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 MANO PO 5
8 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637081-85

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ERAGON
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 SUPER NOYPI

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 RESERVED
2 ERAGON
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 FEAST
6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 THE RETURN
2 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 RESERVED
6 ERAGON
7 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 ERAGON
2 THE RETURN
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BOA
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 FEAST

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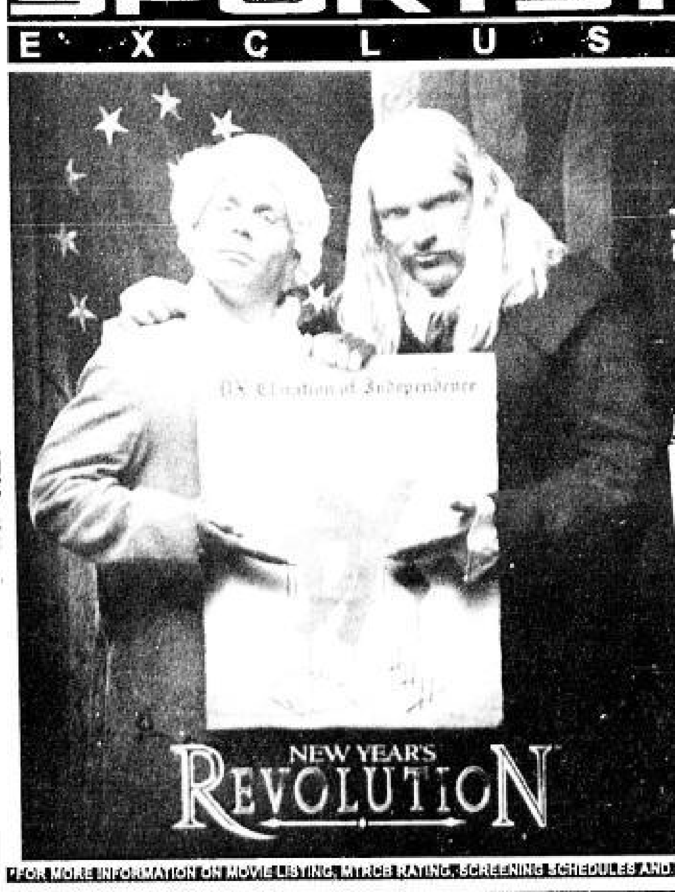

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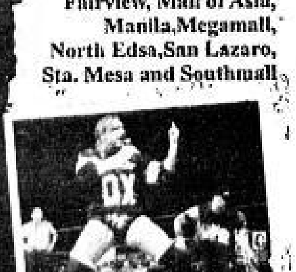

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MMTA METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ERAGON
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

[illegible]
ERAGON

Masagana Cinema (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 ERAGON
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Center Mall Cinema Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 ERAGON
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ROB-B-HOOD

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati Waltermart Center, China Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4236

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ROB-B-HOOD

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL

Eastwood Cinemas (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.4963 or 72

1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 ERAGON
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

Starmall (Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 ERAGON
5 RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Metropolis Star Cinema www.clickthecity.com.ph (ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4

THEATRES
[illegible]

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Pacific Mall Lucena Cinemagic Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL - 8
2 ERAGON
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 ERAGON

Filinvest Festival Cinema (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL - 8
2 ERAGON
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 ERAGON
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 MANO PO - 5
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

Llanas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
2 MANO PO -5

Blue Wave Marikina Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ERAGON
4 RESERVED

Llanas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 GRO
3 UNANG TIKIM
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

SUPER CINERAMA Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228

1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 ERAGON
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Llanas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 BED TIME STORY
3 ERAGON
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 ROB-B-HOOD

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON

Marketplace Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KAMASUTRA- 3
4 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
2 MANO PO -5

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City — Tel. No: 8981440-41 — DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 11:10,2:10,5:10,8:10	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:30,4:30,7:30,10:30
ERAGON G 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:00,9:20	ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:35,3:05,5:35,8:05	ERAGON G 1:00,3:20,5:40, 8:00,10:20

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CINEMA 1 — ERAGON 11:40 , 2:05 , 4:30 6:55 , 9:20 GP
CINEMA 2 — GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 12:00 , 2:35 , 5:10 7:45 , 10:20 PG-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS — *...a dinertainment for all!*

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 — ROB-B-HOOD 11:40 , 2:25 , 5:10 7:55 , 10:35 PG13
CINEMA 4 — ERAGON 10:30 , 12:55 ,3:20 5:45 , 8:10 , 10:35 GP
CINEMA 5 — BLOOD DIAMOND 10:30 , 1:25 , 4:20 7:15 , 10:10 R-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

Jan 23 , 2007	Marissa Sanchez	6:30 PM
Feb 02 & 03 , 2007	Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby	6:00 PM
Feb 13 & 14 , 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:30 PM
Feb 16 & 17 , 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
JAN 16 , 23 , 30 , 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:30 PM

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OPENS JANUARY 17
MTRCB RATING PG-13 — Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

[illegible]

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

ANGEL LOCSIN

A 'hurting' Angel . . .

From page E1

fessional level. Robin himself asked that Angel be left alone.

"She is still recovering from heartache," said Robin, who described Angel in earlier interviews as "irresistible."

Angel refused to divulge the real reason for the breakup. "That's very private," she said. "I don't want to be saying nasty things about him."

She insisted that Oyo, who was being linked to actress Bing Loyzaga, had been true to her.

She stressed that no third party was involved. "But not having enough time for your partner is enough reason," she said, admitting that this was often the case from her end.

Angel also said she wasn't shutting the door on Oyo Boy but that, since the breakup, she had focused on work.

"That's a sure way to get over a broken heart," she said. "Also, I surround myself with the right people, like good friends and family. Life goes on."

Don't you dare die on us, Ely Buendia

From page E2

nothing left in that wonderfully insane brain of yours but indecipherable music that only those in cloak-and-dagger security agencies would appreciate.

I disagree.

I think you're very much like a surfer who, exhausted from catching wave after similar wave, decided to plant his board in the sand and sit down to watch the sea. But you aren't just watching. Your eye is cast towards the horizon, eyeing that perfect wave, waiting.

So get through this and live longer, *ayt*? When that perfect wave comes, we want to watch you go out there and catch it.

This also appears as a blog entry on theboyfromsmallville.wordpress.com.

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THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 ROB-B-HOOD	3 ERAGON	4 KASAL KASALI KASALO
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 ERAGON	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 8	5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	6 ERAGON	7 ROB-B-HOOD
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND		2 ERAGON	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	5 ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS		2 BLOOD DIAMOND	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ERAGON	2 BLOOD DIAMOND	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 KASAL KASALI KASALO
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 KASAL KASALI KASALO		2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 BLOOD DIAMOND	5 ERAGON	

At the Activity Center
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Honda Car Exhibit January 19 to 23, 2007	Power Rangers Space Patrol Delta (SPD) Meet & Greet Event January 21, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Live Remote Broadcast of Miss Cebu Coronation Night January 18, 2007	Nestle Breakfast Cereals Event January 6 to 7, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 3: Convergence of Beauty & Nature Exhibit, January 11 to 14, 2007
Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents MOOSE MURDERS at REP's Globe Theater - January 12 to 28, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala MUSEUM — Zero-In 5 Convergence Black Bouquet: Juvenal Sanso Prints, Until March 11, 2007. For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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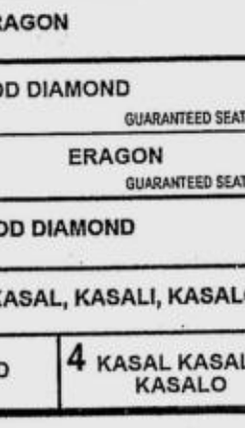
★★★★
"This is one of the year's best films!" --- Norm Wilner / METRO TORONTO
"... MAGIC..." --- Peter Travers / ROLLING STONE
★★★★
"BRILLIANT!" --- Shawn Edward / FOX-TV
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
Will Ferrell
Stranger than Fiction
Emma Thompson · Dustin Hoffman · Maggie Gyllenhaal · Queen Latifah



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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 ERAGON • THX
2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30

2 BLOOD DIAMOND
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

4 ERAGON
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

5 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 Reserved for VICTORY CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

7 MANO PO 5
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

10 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ERAGON
10:20 12:30 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 BLOOD DIAMOND
10:10 1:05 4:00 6.55 9:50

4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10:30 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 ROB-B-HOOD
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 ERAGON
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:35 9 00

METRO EAST 682-8189 • 682-8190

1 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20

3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

4 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:35 6:20 9:05

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
1:20 4:00 6:40 9:00

6 ERAGON
11:00 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00

7 ERAGON
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

8 BLOOD DIAMOND
11:20 2:30 5:40 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3228-30

1 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

PIONEER 687-5378

1 ERAGON
1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20

2 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:05 2 55 5:45 8 35

3 ROB-B-HOOD
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20

4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
1 40 4:00 6:20 8:40

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1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 LIGALIG
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KAMASUTRA 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 ROB-B-HOOD

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 LIGALIG
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 MANO PO 5

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 KAMASUTRA 3
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ERAGON
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 981-6270

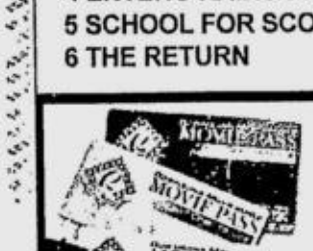
1 ERAGON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 ERAGON

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0458

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ERAGON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3/SHAKE RATTLE
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6 THE RETURN

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 THE RETURN
5 KAMASUTRA 3
6 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS



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Brad and Angelin

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—AT tomorrow's (Tuesday morning in Manila) Golden Globe Awards, all eyes will be on table No. 1 in the International Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

Sitting at that prime table are Hollywood's reigning couple, beautiful people-with-a-purpose **Brad Pitt** and **Angelina Jolie**. How the much-admired pair got assigned the room's top spot and who else sits where and with whom are among the lessons we learned in our second year of being trained how to seat more than 1,000 guests, most of whom are famous, or nominees, or both. It's a task easier said than done.

The studios, networks and film and TV companies with nominations naturally want more tables than they are allotted at Hollywood's party of the year. Unlike the Oscars, the Globes attendees sit at tables and are served a full dinner and plenty of wine and champagne. But with the limited space, the few weeks leading to the Globe awards night become a tense, exciting time of bargaining and counter-bargaining for more seats and tables.

This is one party where folks are only too happy to shell out $600 per ticket. Even the nominees' tickets are not complimentary—but their studios and networks gladly pay for them.

Our work begins immediately after the nominations are announced, continues through the holidays and does not end until the day of the Globes itself. We have a copy of the hotel's ballroom plan where we mark who sits where—it's studied and constantly revised until the big day.

TRAFFIC alert on San

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Champagne toasts

So who gets to to
Brad—nominated for
Angelina? His "Babel"
Barraza, who are up a
Actress race. And Aleja
director who made it
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Table 2 is just as "te
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his dad, and Will's mo
are "Stranger Than Fic

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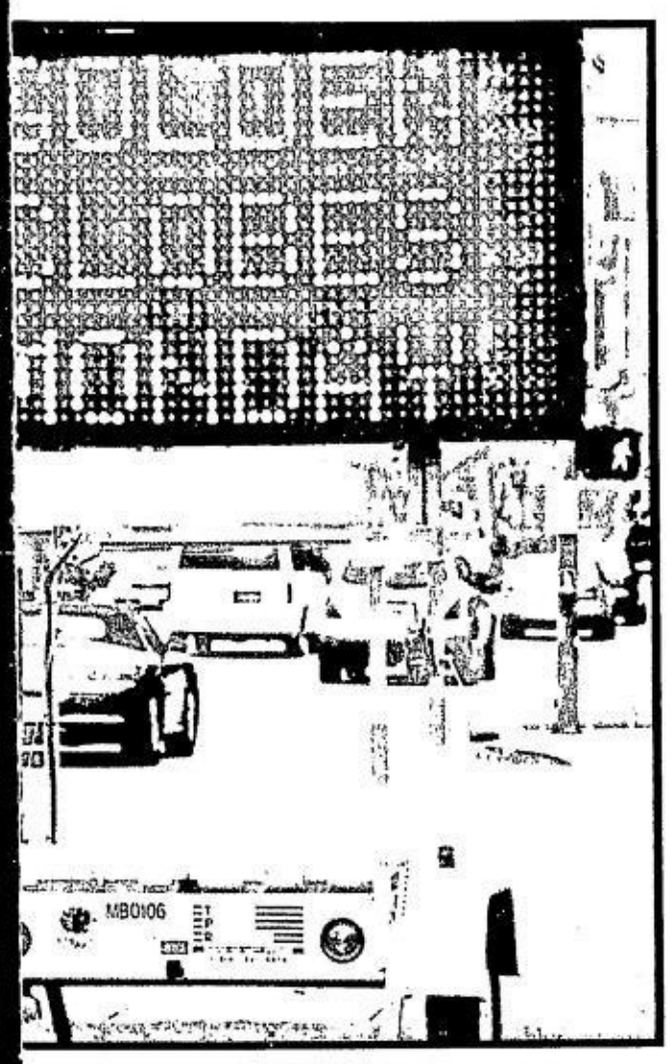
OPENS JANUARY 17

a get top table at Golden Globes



ta Monica Boulevard, which leads to the awards venue.

"The Queen" star, **Helen Mirren,** reigns at table 6. Considered the front-runner for Best Actress, Helen will wear a **Donna Karan** gown and Chopard jewelry. In Her Highness' court are her husband, filmmaker **Taylor Hackford** (award-winning "Ray"), "The Queen" director (**Stephen Frears**) and writer (**Peter Morgan**).

Just a little more than a year ago, the Weinstein brothers, Harvey and Bob, ran Miramax. Now they have their own table (7) and their own movie company, Weinstein Co. Joining them are stars from their movies—**Renee Zellweger** ("Miss Potter"), director **Emilio Estevez** (his Best Picture candidate, "Bobby" will be introduced by his brother, **Charlie Sheen**), and Sienna Miller ("Factory Girl").

Table 8 has a solid chance of breaking into cheers. Clint Eastwood, aside from being in the running for Best Director for "Flags of Our Fathers," finds himself in an unusual situation. His "Letters from Iwo Jima," a companion piece to "Flags," is a contender in the Best Foreign Language Film. The Golden Globes goes by a film's language. While "Letters" is an American production, it is completely in Japanese and is therefore nominated in the Best Foreign Film category.

Clint's party mates are his "Letters" star, **Ken Watanabe** and wife, actress **Kaho Minami, Steven Spielberg,** who will present the Best Director trophy, and daughter **Sasha Spielberg.**

With **Beyonce Knowles, Eddie Murphy, Jennifer Hudson** and **Jamie Foxx** (who is flying all the way from Paris to introduce their "Dreamgirls"), DreamWorks/Paramount's table 9 could be a party by itself. Also in the mix are DreamWorks co-founder **David Geffen;** the movie's director, **Bill Condon;** and Paramount big boss **Brad Grey.**

But the fun table could be 10, which throws in **Meryl Streep** and **Sacha Baron Cohen** ("Borat" creator) together. We'd love to hear the exchange between them. How did they end up at the same table? Their hit movies, "The Devil Wears Prada" and "Borat: Cultural Learnings...," were both made by 20th Century Fox. And they just might end up winning the top acting awards in the comedy or musical category. Cheering them on will be Meryl's youngest daughter, **Louisa Gummer,** and Sacha's fiancée, actress **Isla Fisher** ("The Wedding Crashers"). "Devil" has the perfect presenter: New York fashionista, **Sarah Jessica Parker.**

No table 13

The world's richest and most powerful media mogul, **Rupert Murdoch,** is also at 10 because Fox is part of his global empire. "The Donald" (Trump) and his wife Melania will also attend.

Emily Blunt, who plays Meryl's assistant in "The Devil...," is at another table with her boyfriend, singer **Michael Bublé.**

Presenters **Reese Witherspoon** and **Cameron Diaz,** both newly single, provide the glamour at table 11, with Disney executives, including **John Lasseter,** whose "Cars" has a shot at being the Golden Globes' first Best Animated Film. In this category with just three nominees, the other bets are "Happy Feet" and "Monster House."

Prince, who earned a nod in the Best Original Song race as composer of "Happy Feet's" theme, is at table 12 with **Kate Winslet** and **Jackie Earle Haley,** both very good in "Little Children."

BRAD/ E6

Plus, who are seated with whom ... and where

works frequently change their sugges-ominees should be seated, and call, fax s to us. Also, due to 9/11, security is the name of everyone in the room.
ne that requires a Hollywood veteran's g order in Tinseltown, who's who and who can or cannot sit together because are feuding. You'd be surprised; some d me—anxious about who they are sit-ow in advance.
room has four levels. At the Globes, the the stage and called the pit, is where ks and spillover movie personalities get senters (they get the best spot: onstage, are seated in the second tier.
h levels go the rest of the invitees. Each here are a few that seat only 10 because This event is such a hot ticket that top lities don't mind even when they are —the important thing is, they are in the

t free-flowing Moet & Chandon with est Supporting Actor for "Babel"—and co-stars, **Rinko Kikuchi** and **Adriana** ainst each other in the Best Supporting **ndro Gonzalez Inarritu,** the Mexican ossible for these thespians to be hon-

egenic"—its occupants are the real Mr. tor nominee **Will** and **Jada,** their cute stole "The Pursuit of Happyness" from ner, **Caroline Smith.** Sharing this table ion's" **Will Ferrell,** "Volver's" **Penelope Cruz** and director, **Pedro Almodovar,** both nominees. The connection between Penelope and the two Wills illustrates the link among table-mates not be easily apparent to the viewers: "Pursuit" and "Stranger" are by Sony Pictures, while "Volver" is a product of Sony Pictures Classics.

At table 3 is Best Actor contender **Leonardo DiCaprio.** His date is not one of his lovely model friends; it's his mother, **Irmalin DiCaprio,** but she is seated at another table. Leo's table-mates are his "The Departed" director, **Martin Scorsese** and co-star, **Mark Wahlberg.** Which of these three will stand up and collect a trophy? The popular theory is that Leo, with two nominations (the other is for "Blood Diamond"), will cancel himself out but then we can also look at it this way: he has two chances of winning.

Leo's strongest competition, **Forest Whitaker** ("The Last King of Scotland"), is close by, at table 5 which has the rest of the Fox Searchlight contingent: **Greg Kinnear** and **Toni Collette** of the charming "Little Miss Sunshine," **Cate Blanchett** (another one with mom in tow, **June Blanchett**—aren't these stars sweet?) of the compelling "Notes On A Scandal" and **Aaron Eckhart** of the brilliant, witty "Thank You For Smoking." And where is "Little Miss Sunshine," **Abigail Brisling?** At another table with **Paul Dano,** who plays her teenage brother, and the always-terrific **Alan Alkin,** who portrays her grandpa.

Old Hollywood is represented at table 5 with **Warren Beatty, Jack Nicholson** and **Dustin Hoffman.** Jack, a Best Supporting Actor nominee, is also a proud daddy in that room. His daughter Lorraine, 16, will be doing her onstage duties as this year's Miss Golden Globe Awards. Warren receives the Cecil B. DeMille Award, one of the night's top plums, and his wife Annette Bening while she is a Best Actress contender for "Running With Scissors."

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	HAPPY FEET 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 1:40 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:40	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	ERAGON 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

MALL 5

ERAGON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30	ROB-B-HOOD 12:40 / 3:30 / 5:20 / 8:10	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 12:35 / 2:30 / 5:25 / 8:20
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 1:00 / 3:35 / 6:10 / 8:45	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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Justin & Cameron, and other break-ups

CAMERON Diaz and Justin Timberlake

LOS ANGELES—JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE AND Cameron Diaz are officially broken up.

The duo—dating since 2003—confirmed their split Thursday in a joint statement, according to the Associated Press.

"We have … ended our romantic relationship, and have done so mutually and as friends, with continued love and respect for one another," the pair reportedly said.

Last week, E! Online columnist Ted Casablanca reported Timberlake was spotted at the Alpha Dog post-premiere party in the company of Scarlett Johansson, with whom he shot a video right after Christmas.

The music-video casting of Johansson, 22, was cited by Us Weekly as the "final straw" for the Diaz-Timberlake tandem, with Diaz said to be jealous of the younger actress and Timberlake said to be tired of Diaz's jealousy.

Johansson, recently uncoupled from Josh Hartnett.

Timberlake was among the New Year's revelers who rang in 2007 at the Los Angeles home of actress Kate Hudson, recently divorced from rocker Chris Robinson, and recently uncoupled from reputed beau Owen Wilson.

Diaz, meanwhile, is said by Us Weekly to be commiserating with Charlie's Angels costar Drew Barrymore, recently uncoupled from Strokes drummer Fabrizio Moretti. *Reports from AP and E! Online*

Clooneys' current concern

WASHINGTON—PREVIOUSLY-UNSEEN FOOTAGE recorded by actor George Clooney and his journalist father Nick while traveling to the border of the war-ravaged Darfur region of Sudan will be aired Monday.

At a premiere of the documentary Wednesday attended by members of Congress, the Clooneys—with George speaking by video conference from California—discussed their concern that governments are not doing enough to stop what George called the first genocide of the 21st Century.

"I will remember forever how the people there were hanging from such a thin thread and there were so many ways for them to die and yet they were optimistic," George Clooney told the audience. *AP*

RUSHES

Face of Aussie tourism

CANBERRA—BINDI IRWIN, THE 8-YEAR-OLD daughter of late Australian "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin, is to help market her country to the world, becoming a new face for Australian tourism, local media said on Friday.

BINDI IRWIN AP

Bindi, currently in the United States to kick off her American show business career, will be named a tourism ambassador by Australian Tourism Minister Fran Bailey, who has travelled there to make the announcement.

Bindi and her mother Terri are in the US also to help promote Australia as part of the "G'Day USA" campaign," Bailey told journalists. *Reuters*

Steve Martin reminisces

NEW YORK—STEVE MARTIN WOULD LIKE you to know more about his years as a wild and crazy guy.

The comedian, filmmaker, actor and author is writing a memoir, "Born Standing Up," billed by publisher Scribner as "his first work of narrative nonfiction," a "riveting chronicle of his early years as a stand-up comedian and a fascinating portrait of an era."

Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, is hoping to have the book out by early 2008. *AP*

How to score chicks

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND—ACTOR JACK Black turned his "School of Rock" role into reality this week when he plucked two preteen musicians from obscurity and asked them to perform with his rock band in New Zealand.

JACK Black, right, takes a break with musical child support act Black Tear. AP

Black—who plays a cash-strapped teacher who turns his class into a rock band in the 2003 comedy—was touring New Zealand's South Island with his two-man band, Tenacious D, when he spotted the boys performing for money in central Christchurch on Monday. Impressed, he asked the duo to open his Christchurch gig on Tuesday.

The boys said they did not sleep the night before the concert and had practiced their song, Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower," only about 10 times.

"I was just trying not to wet myself, honestly," drummer Max Tetley, 11, told New Zealand's TV Three of meeting the Hollywood star. Guitarist Alex Philpott, 10, said he had seen "School of Rock" around 45 times.

"We'll be scoring heaps of chicks," Christchurch's The Press newspaper quoted the duo as saying. *AP*

No Mel at preem

MEXICO CITY—ACTOR AND DIRECTOR MEL Gibson will come down to Mexico next week for a private viewing of his new movie "Apocalypto," about the ancient Mayans, but won't attend the Mexican premiere, his publicist said Thursday.

"Apocalypto" tells the story of the Mayan people—who built a civilization in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras—and is in a Mayan language. It has broken box-office records for foreign language films in its opening weekends in several countries, including Britain. It has also earned a Golden Globe nomination for best foreign-language film. *AP*

Grammys, like "Idol"

LOS ANGELES—IN ANOTHER SIGN OF HOW TV talent show "American Idol" has permeated pop culture, the Grammys are running an Idol-like contest to choose a singer to duet with Justin Timberlake on the Feb. 11 awards telecast.

The public will winnow down a list of aspiring singers in the weeks preceding the show and choose the winner of the "My Grammy Moment" contest during the live program. *Reuters*

Banned from "Hobbit"

LOS ANGELES—"LORD OF THE RINGS" director Peter Jackson has been barred from making "The Hobbit," in the latest twist to a bitter public feud between Hollywood studio New Line and the New Zealand filmmaker.

Bob Shaye, co-chairman of studio New Line, which oversaw production of Jackson's Oscar-winning adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's "Rings" trilogy, told Sci-Fi Wire Web site that Jackson would "never" shoot "The Hobbit."

Jackson is embroiled in a legal wrangle with New Line over royalties from the "Rings" films, which have grossed more than $3 billion in ticket sales alone since 2001. AFP

Abba Streep

LOS ANGELES—OSCAR-WINNING HOLLY-wood legend Meryl Streep is set to star in a big-screen adaptation of hit ABBA musical "Mamma Mia," movie industry press reports said Thursday.

Streep will star as the rebellious single mother of the musical's central character, a bride-to-be who launches a search for her father, against a soundtrack of hits by the Swedish super group of the 1970s and 1980s.

MERYL STREEP

"She was always at the top of our wish list," producer Judy Craymer was quoted as saying by movie daily Variety.

Since it's London opening in 1999, "Mamma Mia" has grossed more than $1 billion around the world, making it one of the most successful musicals of all time. *AFP*

Brad & Angelina get top table …

From page E4

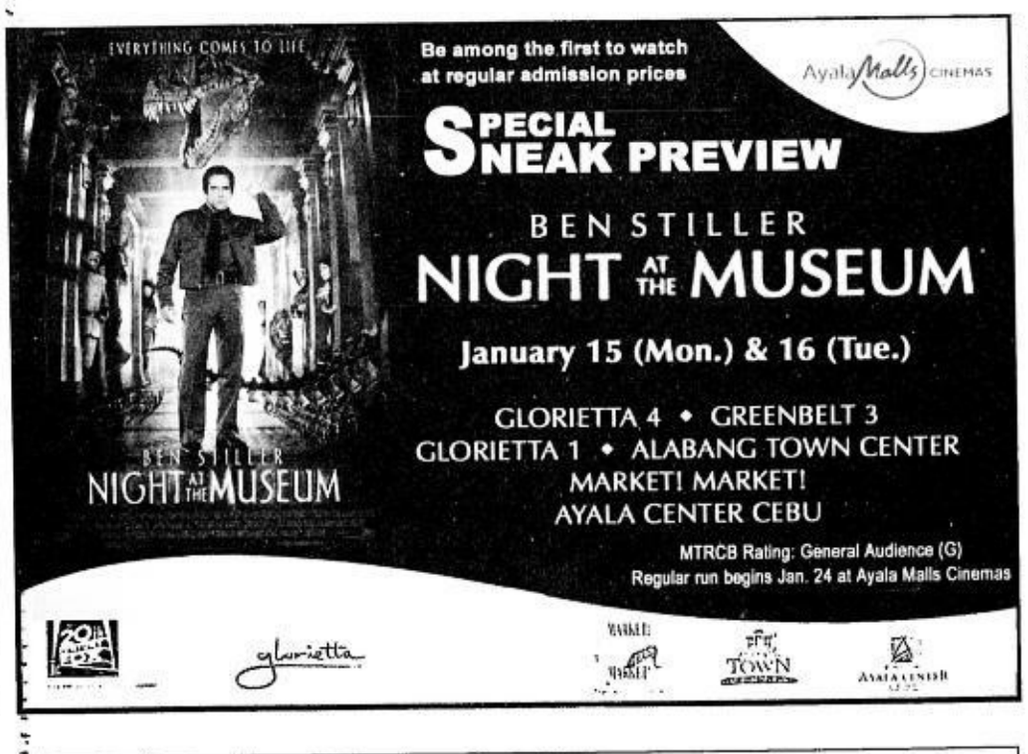
Following superstition, there is no table 13. So we jump to 14, where "Dreamgirl" **Anika Noni Rose** has the spotlight all to herself. At table 15 are Best Supporting Actor contender **Ben Affleck** ("Hollywoodland") and his wife, actress **Jennifer Garner, Rachel Weisz,** a presenter by virtue of her Best Supporting Actress win last year, and her fiancé, **Darren Aronofsky.**

Spread throughout the room, in the pit and in the next tier, are nominees, presenters and guests. Cameron's ex, **Justin Timberlake,** is at a different table with fellow presenters **Jennifer Lopez, Sharon Stone and Pierce Brosnan. Also in the ballroom are George Clooney, Tom Hanks, Drew Barrymore, Steve Carell, Hilary Swank, Hugh Grant, Sean Combs, Joaquin Phoenix, Salma Hayek, Terrence Howard, Naomi Watts, Seal and wife Heidi Klum, Sheryl Crow, Mary J. Blige, Bryan Adams** and **Ben Stiller.**

Touchstone Television ("Grey's Anatomy," "Ugly Betty," "Lost" and "Scrubs"), NBC Universal ("Heroes," "The Office," "House," and "30 Rock") and HBO ("The Sopranos," "Big Love," "Entourage," "Elizabeth I," "Tsunami, The Aftermath" and "Mrs. Harris") occupy the prime tables assigned to the nominees from the small screen.

As for the seven parties happening simultaneously in the hotel grounds right after the show? We happily leave the planning to their hosts, which include the major studios, InStyle Magazine and E!

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.



FUN SNAPS FROM 2006

LAUGHTER IN THE NEWSROOM. INQUIRER lensman Rudy Esperas caught Jessica Soho, GMA 7 vice president for News, in a rare relaxed mood. Believe it or not, Soho knows how far a hearty giggle goes in relieving stress at work. Laughter, and then some: This same boss personally bought *hibe*, *daing* and *bagoong*, as *baon* for her Mount Everest team.

Movie-TV board scores 3 shows

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

A torrid kiss, a pair of undies & a game get some people in trouble

THREE SHOWS STARTED 2007 ON THE wrong foot, as far as the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) is concerned.

Two noontime programs, "Wowowee" on ABS-CBN 2 and "Eat Bulaga" (GMA 7), and prime time gag show "Nuts Entertainment" (GMA 7), got the goat of the movie-TV board for airing "offensive" scenes.

On Dec. 16, special board agents noted that a dancer, later identified as Lea Santos, a.k.a. Luningning, inadvertently flashed her underwear while performing a high kick.

On Jan. 6, two members of the audience were caught on-cam in a torrid kiss in the show's "Kiss Muna" segment.

In the same episode, a female contestant touched her breasts in the "Boom Tarat" portion.

Action plan

The MTRCB ordered Cynthia Jordan, "Wowowee" production manager, to appear before the Hearing and Adjudication Committee on Jan. 10.

In a letter dated Jan. 11, Jordan informed the board that "Wowowee" had "removed the 'Kiss Muna' segment, [would remind] participating audience members [to] be cautious in their language and actions [and] ensure that the show's dancers were properly attired and [that] featured dance [steps] were executed ... in a manner that was not offensive."

Jordan's letter also said Santos would be "excluded from performing in the segment 'Pera o Bayong' for four days beginning Jan. 11."

Jordan told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview on Friday that show host Willie Revillame issued a public apology on Jan. 11 and that, in the same episode, Santos apologized.

"Eat Bulaga," rival show of "Wowowee," committed a similar violation, according to the board.

In a letter dated Jan. 8, board chair Ma. Consoliza Laguardia reprimanded the show because of "complaints" concerning the Jan. 6 performance of the TV Babes dancers whose "gyrations were too sexy for comfort."

Sought for comment, Malou Choa-Fagar, executive in charge of production of "Eat Bulaga," vowed to write to the board "to formalize our intent to avoid [repeating] the violation."

MTRCB also put to task GMA 7's Wednesday night gag show "Nuts Entertainment" because of its Dec. 27 episode which was deemed "offensive ... to the point of obnoxiousness" by the board's monitoring unit.

The board invited Jose Mari Abacan, GMA 7 vice president for program management, to a hearing on Jan. 10. The next day, Abacan wrote to the board, apologizing for the presentation of the game "Ander da Saya" on "Nuts."

Abacan told INQUIRER Entertainment that the network would issue a public apology, to be aired on the show next week.

In his letter, Abacan also agreed to "submit the program to a per-episode review by the board for one month."

From the nation's No. 1 Newspaper:
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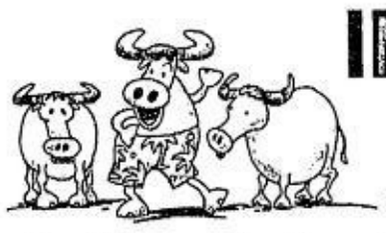


Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

JOB Market

Scorsese eyes Golden Globe

LOS ANGELES—POWERFUL DRAMA "Babel" and Martin Scorsese's bloody crime thriller "The Departed" are tipped to dominate the 64th Golden Globes here Monday as the race for next month's Oscars heats up.

"Babel" and "The Departed" share 13 nominations between them heading into the star-studded extravaganza in Beverly Hills, which has increasingly come to be seen as a gauge of likely Oscars winners.

In the major categories, "The Departed," which has six nominations against "Babel's" seven, could deliver Scorsese his second Golden Globes Best Director prize in four years following his 2003 win for "Gangs of New York."

Five previous nods

Scorsese, who has never won an Oscar despite being nominated five times, is seen as a lock for the major directing prizes of the 2007 awards season, which culminates with the Academy Awards on February 25.

In the past three years, the Best Director winner at the Golden Globes has gone on to win the equivalent Oscar. But pundits are uncertain whether "The Departed"—which stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon and Jack Nicholson in a remake of the 2002 Hong Kong film "Infernal Affairs"—will emulate the anticipated success of its director.

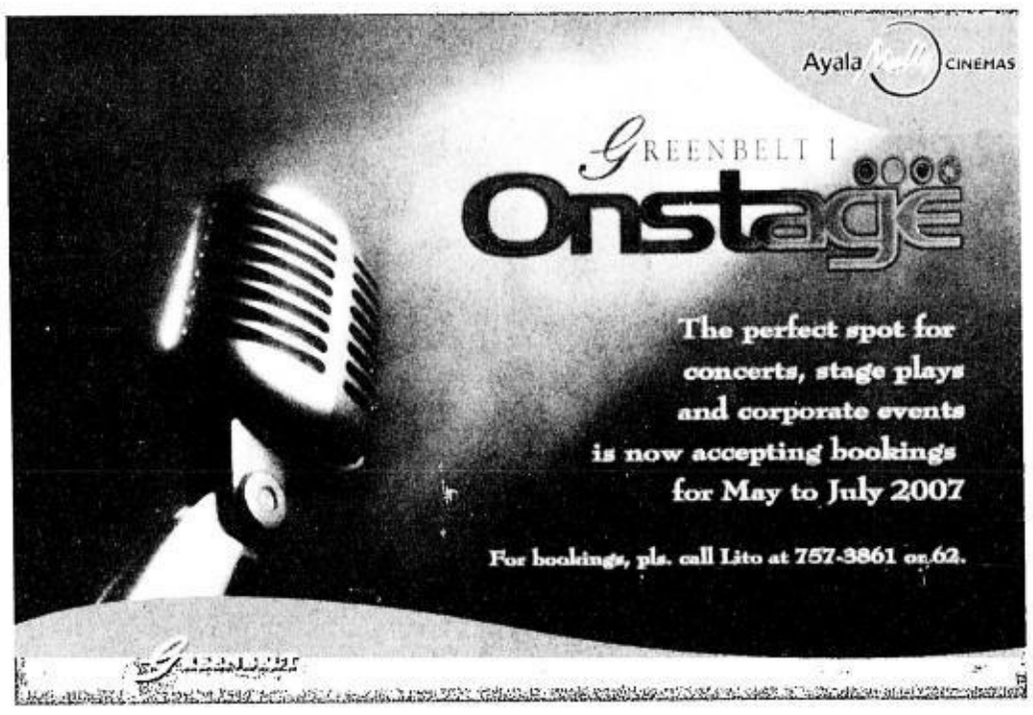
"It's Scorsese's year—the question is, does his film go with him?," Tom O'Neil, a columnist with the Los Angeles Times' theenvelope.com, told AFP. "The race for Best Drama really is wide open. It could be 'The Departed,' but it could be 'Babel.'"

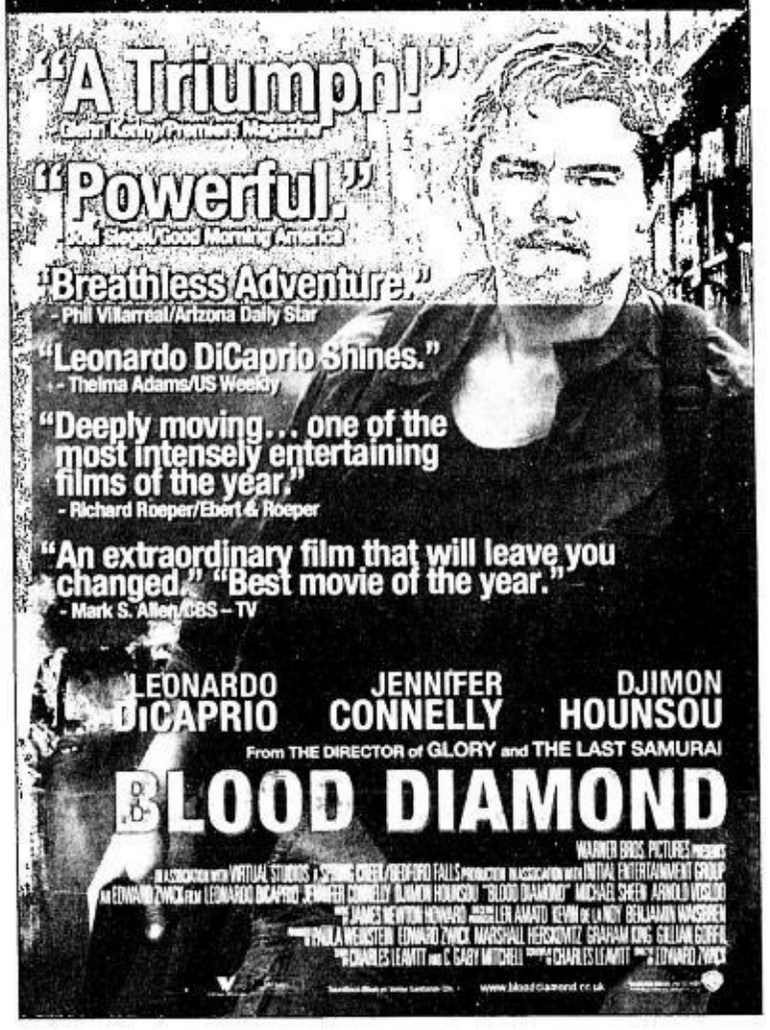
Competition

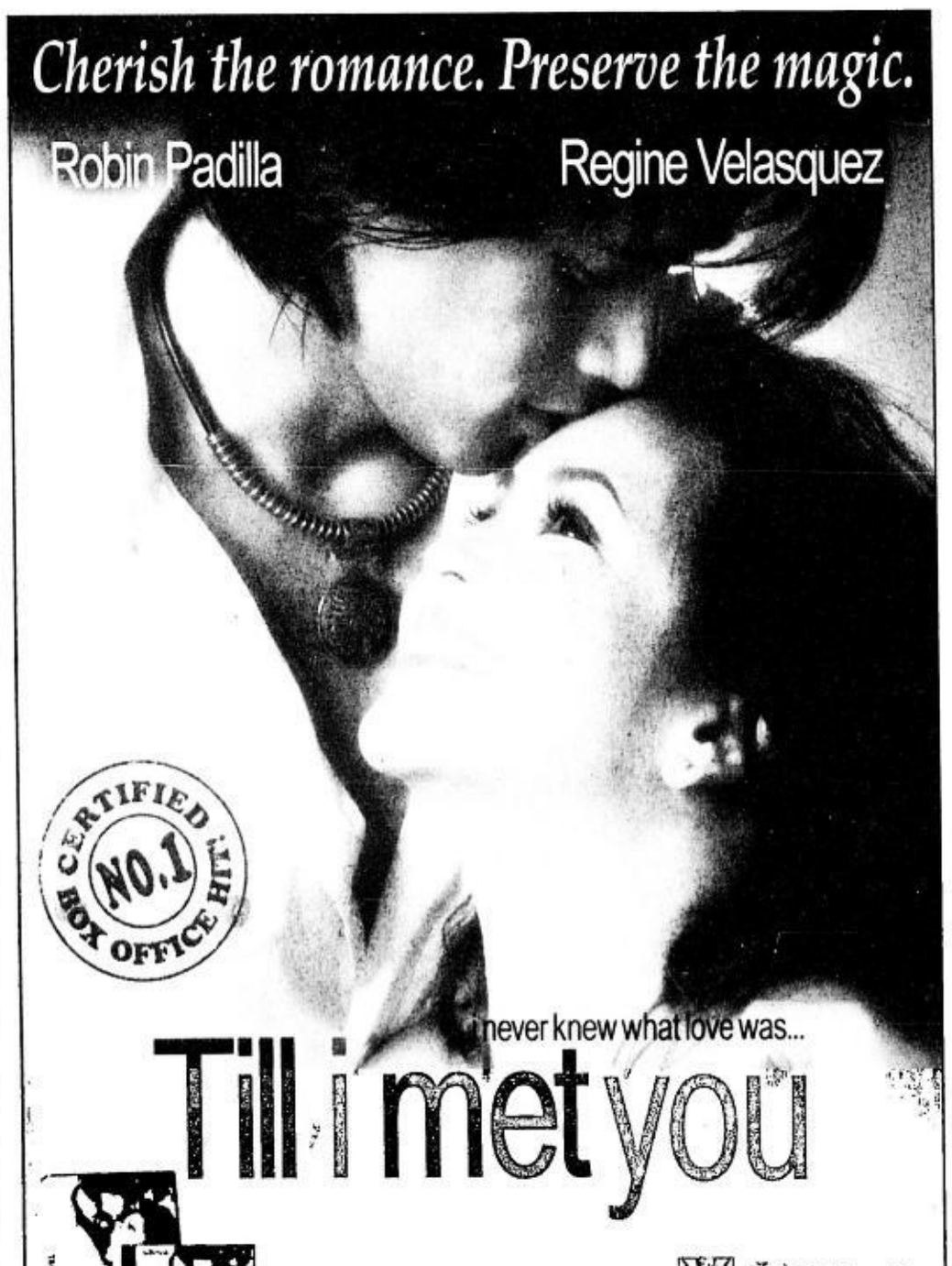
In the Best Director category, Scorsese faces competition from Inarritu, Britain's Stephen Frears ("The Queen") and perennial favorite Clint Eastwood.

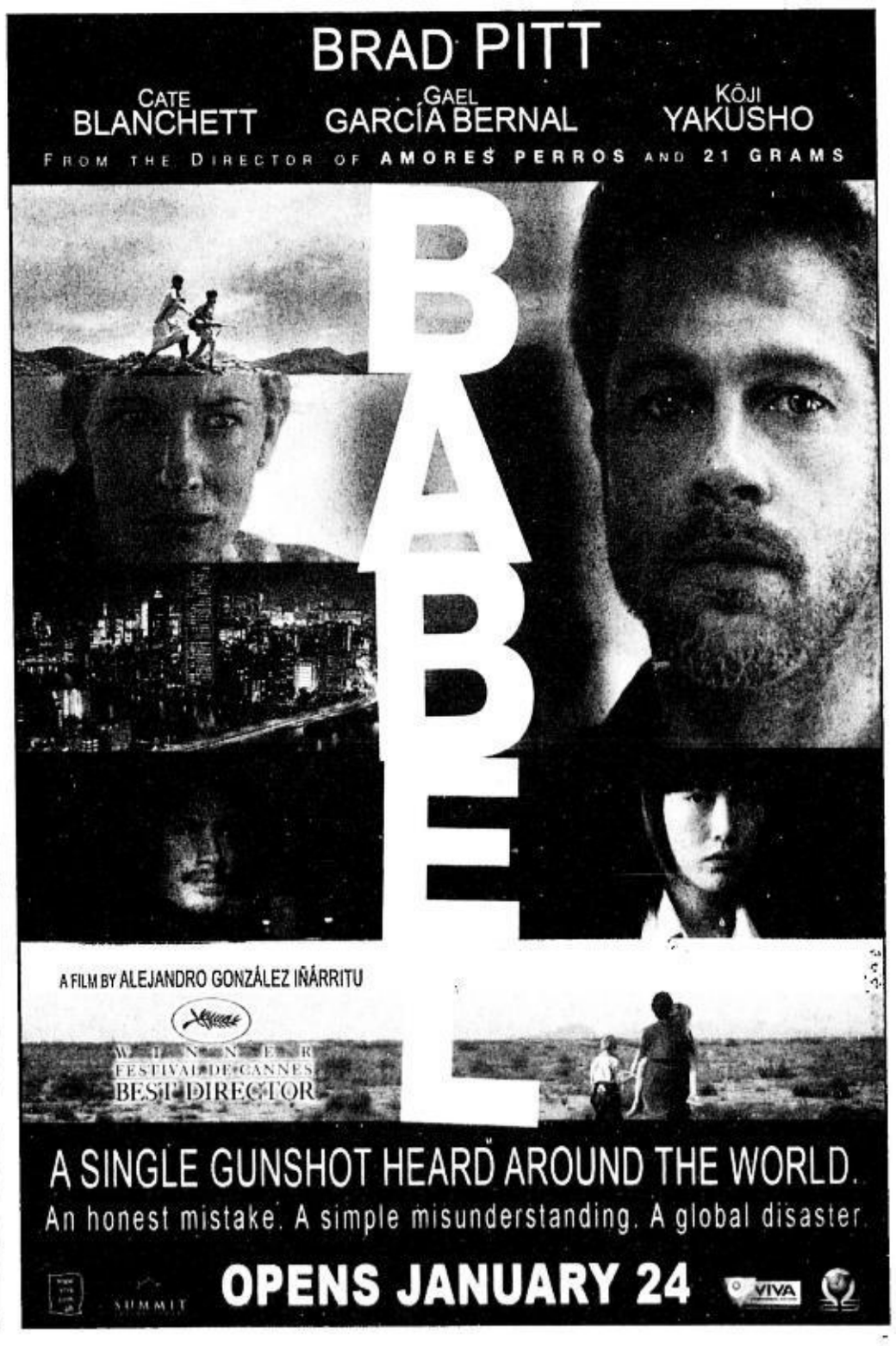
Eastwood has been double-nominated for his back-to-back World War Two dramas "Flags of our Fathers" and "Letters from Iwo Jima," which tell the story of the battle for Iwo Jima from the perspective of US and Japanese soldiers.

AFP









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PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

January 12, 2007

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING INTERESTED & ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF CONCRETE AND STEEL POLES.

Specification:

Package I – ABC P24,866,070.00 (VAT Exclusive)

25 ft.	1000 pcs.
30 ft.	1000 pcs.
35 ft.	1000 pcs.
40 ft.	1000 pcs.

Package II – ABC P12,589,290.00 (VAT Exclusive)

25 ft., 112 mm butt, diameter, 90mm tip diameter 3000 pcs.

You are therefore invited to submit your bid/proposals to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on January 23, (Tuesday), 11:00 A.M. at PELCO II Board room, San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein sealed bids will be opened in your presence or your duly authorized representative. Late submission and/or incomplete bids/proposals or other related documents shall not be accepted.

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/PROPOSALS THE FOLLOWING:

1. Bid Amount
2. Terms of Payment
3. Delivery Date
4. Validity Date
5. Bid Bond, any of the following:
   a. Cash or Manager's Check - 2.5% of the Total Gross Bid Price
   b. Surety Bond - 10% of the Total Gross Bid Price

Please be informed that non-attendance on the pre-bid conference which shall be held on January 18, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at Pelco II main office, San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga, is an outright disqualification for those bidders who would like to join the bidding. For non-accredited interested suppliers, the following requirements shall be submitted to the Committee and shall pay the Accreditation Fee of P1,000.00.

1. Company Profile
2. Latest ITR
3. Audited Financial Statement
4. Business or Mayor's Permit
5. DTI Registration
6. SEC Registration

Late bidders on the scheduled time of the bidding will be disqualified.

THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RAUL L. CANLAS
PBAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) SULPICIO C. LAGARDE, JR.
General Manager

(PDI – Jan. 14 & 15, 2007)

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

January 12, 2007

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING INTERESTED & ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING ELECTRICAL MATERIALS:

Specification:

Package I – ABC P6,508,577.14 (Exclusive of VAT)

1.	Polythelene AAC 1/0	– 74,000 meters
2.	Polythelene AAC #6	– 68,000 meters
3.	TW # 8 Copper	– 48,000 meters
4.	Duplex wire # 6	– 60,000 meters

Brand – preferably Unicon, Phiflex, Delco

Package II – ABC P4,727,678.57 (Exclusive of VAT)

Compression Connectors:

YHO 150	– 115,000 pcs.
YHO 200	– 115,000 pcs.
YPC	– 110,000 pcs.

Package III – ABC P 2,274,883.93 (Exclusive of VAT)

1.	Electrical tape	– 19,000 pcs.
2.	Swinging Clevis Service	– 19,000 pcs.
3.	Spool Insulator 1 3/8 x 1 3/8	– 19,000 pcs.
4.	Eye Nut 5/8"	– 17,000 pcs.
5.	Meter base round	– 1,500 pcs.
6.	Stove Bolt 3/16" x 1"	– 29,000 pcs.

You are therefore invited to submit your bid/proposal to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on January 23, (Tuesday), 11:00 A.M. at PELCO II Board Room, San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein sealed bids will be opened in your presence or your duly authorized representative. Late submission and/or incomplete bids/proposals or other related documents shall not be accepted.

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/PROPOSALS THE FOLLOWING:

1. Bid Amount
2. Terms of Payment
3. Delivery Date
4. Validity Date
5. Bid Bond, any of the following:
   a. Cash or Manager's Check – 2.5% of the Total Gross Bid Price
   b. Surety Bond – 10% of the Total Gross Bid Price

Please be informed that non-attendance on the pre-bid conference which shall be held on January 18, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at Pelco II main office, San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga, is an outright disqualification for those bidders who would like to join the bidding. For non-accredited interested suppliers, the following requirements shall be submitted to the Committee and shall pay the Accreditation Fee of P1,000.00

1. Company Profile
2. Latest ITR
3. Audited Financial Statement
4. Business or Mayor's Permit
5. DTI Registration
6. SEC Registration

Late bidders on the schedule time of the bidding will be disqualified.

THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RAUL L. CANLAS
PBAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) SULPICIO C. LAGARDE, JR.
General Manager

(PDI – Jan. 14 & 15, 2007)

FOUNDATION FOR THE PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT
Fostering Partnerships for the Environment

The Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), is inviting interested groups to engage in Rapid Site Assessments (RSAs) to collect and/or update baseline information and analyze the biological diversity, socio-cultural, economic and geo-political profile of thirteen (13) clustered areas.

Cluster areas requiring profiles are portions of the following:

Mindanao

1. Mt. Matutum and Ligawasan Marsh
2. Pulangi Watershed and Arakan
3. Lake Mainit
4. Mt. Malindang

Visayas

1. Guiuan
2. Paranas
3. North West Panay
4. North Negros Forest and Mt. Talinis-Twin Lakes

Luzon

1. Abra and Kalinga
2. Palawan
3. Mt. Banahaw, Biak na Bato and Mt. Bulusan
4. Zambales
5. Bolos Point Cagayan

Interested groups must meet the following criteria:

1. From the academe, a research institution or a non-government organization and with juridical personality and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
2. Have interdisciplinary expertise and with at least three (3) years experience of conducting research in the areas required above
3. Be located within or near the site/area and/or have an existing partnership with a local institution

and must show proof of the above and submit the following:

1. Name of Team Leader and/or Person to Contact
2. Name of Local Partner in Site of Interest, if applicable
3. Name/s of Potential Team Members/Researchers
4. Area/s of Expertise of Major Team Members/Researchers
5. Curriculum Vitaé of Major Researchers
6. List of past researchers
7. List of past partners
8. List of current Board Officers

The above information should be submitted on or before 5 February 2007 to:

The Executive Director
Foundation for the Philippine Environment
 # 77 Matahimik Street, Teachers' Village West,
Diliman 1101, Quezon City
fpersa@fpe.ph

(PDI – January 14 & 21, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
CITY OF ILOILO

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Iloilo City invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following project.

Name of Project:	Rental of Heavy Equipment for excavation, Dozing, leveling, compacting & soil covering
Project Location:	Calajunan Dumpsite, Brgy. Calajunan, Mandurriao, I.C.
Approved Budget for the Contract:	P 3,603,600.00
Source of Fund:	General Fund – 2007
Contract Duraction:	91 days
Scope of Work:	Rental
Contractor's PCAB License:	At least Small B
Name of Project:	Garbage Collection & Transport Services
Project Location:	Calajunan Dumpsite, Mandurriao, Iloilo City
Approved Budget for the Contract:	P 36,983,700.00
Source of Fund:	General Fund – 2007
Contract Duration:	327 days
Scope of Work:	Garbage Collection
Contractor's PCAB License:	At least Medium A

The Schedule of Bidding Activities is as follows:

Period for the Submission of Letter of Intent	Jan. 22 - Jan. 24, 2007
Period for the Issuance of Eligibility Forms and other Bid Documents:	Jan. 29 - Jan. 31, 2007
Pre-Bid Conference at the City Legal Office Conference Room:	Feb. 01, 2007 10:00 AM
Last Day of Submission of Bids in Sealed Envelopes (c/o BAC Secretariat):	Feb. 13, 2007 10:00 AM
Opening of Bids in Sealed Envelopes at the City Legal Office Conference Room:	Feb. 13, 2007 10:00 AM

Complete sets of Eligibility Requirements may be obtained from the Office of the BAC Secretariat at the General Services Office, City Hall, Iloilo City. Duly accomplished Eligibility Forms shall be submitted in sealed envelope addressed to the BAC Chairman, c/o BAC Secretariat.

Eligible contractors may obtain the Bid Tender Documents at the Office of the BAC Secretariat, General Services Office, City Hall, Iloilo City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand (P2,000.00) Pesos on the above prescribed period.

Minimum Number of Equipments Required for Excavation, dozing, Leveling, Compacting & soil covering:

Bulldozer	Two (2) Units
Backhoe Excavator	One (1) Unit

Minimum Number of Equipments Required for Garbage Collection

Dump Truck (Ave. Capacity of 6 cu.m.)	Four (4) Units
Compactor Truck (Ave. Capacity of 8 cu.m.)	Twenty (20) Units

Prospective Bidders shall signify their conformance to the Bidding Terms and Conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. The criteria to be used by BAC in the Eligibility Check of Prospective Bidders shall be on a non - discretionary "pass/fail" basis.

The provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and other applicable rules and regulations shall govern all particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract.

The BAC reserves the right to accept or reject all Bids or part thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that is considered most advantageous to the Local Government Unit.

(Sgd.) ATTY. EDGARDO GIL
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – Jan. 14, 2007)

A LEADING FILIPINO BEVERAGE & FOOD COMPANY INVITES QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR:

AREA SALES MANAGER
- Male, College Graduate
- Experienced in Consumer Products
- Strong Leadership, responsible and aggressive
- Willing to accept provincial assignments (Visayas)

DISTRICT SALES MANAGER
- College Graduate
- Experienced in Consumer Products
- Strong Leadership
- Responsible, organized and aggressive
- Willing to accept provincial assignments

BRAND MANAGERS
- Male/Female, at least 25 years old
- College Graduate
- Experienced in Fast Moving Consumer goods

PROFESSIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE
- Male, at least 2nd year College Level
- Honest and Trustworthy
- Willing to work extended hours and can handle pressures
- Good driving skills & holder of a Prof. Driver's License

AUDITORS
- Male, at least 23 years old
- Accounting Graduate, Computer literate
- Well versed in auditing Techniques
- Honest & hardworking
- Willing to be assigned in provinces

ACCOUNTANT/ACCOUNTING CLERKS
- Male/Female, must be an Accounting Graduate
- Min. of 2-3 years experience, computer literate
- Can work with minimum supervision

Interested parties can mail their application or apply personally at:

574 EDSA, CALOOCAN CITY
(in front of Toyota Balintawak)

GROWTH WITH EQUITY IN MINDANAO (GEM) PROGRAM
A Project of the United States Agency for International Development
The General Contractor is THE LOUIS BERGER GROUP, INC.
Tel: (6382) 225-1569 • Fax: (6382) 225-1479
USAID Contract No: 492-C-00-02-00018-00

URGENT REQUIREMENT

Invitation for Submission of Expressions of Interest/ Statement of Qualification for the Provision of Internet Connections to Schools in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and other Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao

The Louis Berger Group, Inc. (LBGI) a U.S. firm contracted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement the Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program is inviting interested and qualified firms (telcos/providers/ contractors/suppliers, etc.) to submit letters of interest for the provision of internet access to partner schools in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and other conflict-affected areas in Mindanao (CAAM) under its Computer Literacy and Internet Connectivity (CLIC) Program to submit their expressions of interest and qualification statements.

Firms must demonstrate in their submission that they have the capacity to provide up to a hundred schools (or a fraction thereof on a site-specific basis), located in the ARMM and CAAM, with internet connections based on a schedule to be provided in the request for proposal package, and meeting the following minimum specifications: (a) at least 128 Kbps bandwidth or higher at each school site, scalable to higher levels at a later date as school demand increases, that can support traditional data communications traffic, and optionally, Voice over IP; and (b) may be networked to at least 10 other computer units. Prospective providers may use any transport medium applicable to the geographic location and the terrestrial condition of each school and may resort to setting-up of "last mile" equipment or infrastructure, if necessary. They must also demonstrate a "managed internet service" with the following service/facility: (a) trouble dispatch committing a guaranteed minimum response time for on-site problems and equipment repair; (b) network operations centers to monitor the health and performance of the internet connectivity in the schools as well as a systematic billing system especially when the schools will start paying for their internet subscriptions. The GEM Program will shoulder the one-time installation costs and the first 12 months of the schools' internet access after which the school, through its Parent-Teacher Community Association, will sustain the monthly internet access fees thereon.

Interested firms should send their requests for a copy of the solicitation document to the following address: The Deputy Program Manager for Contracts & Administration, GEM Program, 2/F, 1 Ladislawa Bldg., Ladislawa Ave., Buhangin, Davao City, 8000 Philippines no later than January 17, 2007. The request for proposals will contain the list of proposed schools for connection from the GEM Program through the following tel. nos.: (082) 225-1569 local 202 or (082) 225-1451 to 53. Deadline for receipts of proposals is at 2:00 PM, January 22, 2007. Firms' submission in response to the solicitation must comply with the listed requirements and will be evaluated based on how the proposals respond to the evaluation criteria set forth in the solicitation document. Moreover, the responses should include the firms' corporate profile indicating the full name, addresses, and contact numbers of the principal personnel and description of the firms' major services and products, and certified copies of the following: (i) SEC registration for corporations or partnerships and DTI registration; (ii) PRC licenses (for the current year) of the chief technical engineer(s); (iii) NTC permit or license; (iv) VAT registration certificate; (v) registration of business name; (vi) current business permit; (vii) audited financial statement for the past two years; (viii) list of completed projects as well as list of on-going projects; and (ix) list of client/corporate references.

SBMA DISPOSAL COMMITTEE
SBMA Bldg. 709, Cor. Burgos & Quezon Sts.,
Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Phils. 2222
Telephone (6347) 252-4613 / 4219 / 4474 • Fax 252-4330

INVITATION TO BID

FOR THE SALE OF ASSORTED DISPOSABLE/SURPLUS/ UNSERVICEABLE AND OTHER SCRAP MATERIALS "AS IS, WHERE IS"

ITEM NO.: DESCRIPTION/LOCATION

Lot 01 ASSORTED DISPOSABLE/SCRAP PROPERTIES OF KACE PHILIPPINES LOCATED AT THE BLDG. 895TH B-799 (KACE COMPOUND) AND B-274, LOCATED AT DEWEY AVENUE, SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE.

Lot 02 ASSORTED DISPOSABLE/SCRAP VEHICLES LOCATED AT B-305 TRANSPORTATION, CANAL ROAD, SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE.

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule	Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Jan. 22, 2007 – Jan. 26, 2007 Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Disposal Committee Secretariat Property Management Division Bldg. 709, Burgos St., Subic Bay Freeport Zone
2. Pre-Bid Conference and Inspection of Lots	January 31, 2007 Wednesday, 9:00 a.m.	PPMD Conference Room Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD) Rm 201, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ
3. Submission/Opening of Bids	February 13, 2007 Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.	PPMD Conference Room Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD) Rm 201, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,000.00 to the SBMA Treasury Dept., Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ.

(Sgd.) ATTY. FERDINAND L. HERNANDEZ
Chariman, Disposal Committee A

(PDI – January 14, 2007)

NEED EXTRA CASH?

To settle your account/s or pay lower interest and be free again?
To make those home improvements that has been long overdue?
To start the business expansion you have been planning?
To afford that planned vacation with your family?
To spend a little extra for personal matters?

No Collateral, No PDC's, No Guarantor or Co-Maker Required!!!

Get as much as **25K - 500K** loan amount in 3-5 days

For inquiries please call Tel. # 9005480
Business Connections Mktg.
28f Raffles Bldg. Emeral Ave.,
Ortigas Centre, Pasig City

For as low as **1%** per Month

PARK DEVELOPERS INCORPORATED
is looking for

CUSTOMER RELATIONS ASSISTANTS

- Male/Female, at least 21 years old
- At least High School graduate
- For Sales Promotion
- Willing to do field work and work on extended hours

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS MUST COME IN BUSINESS ATTIRE FROM MONDAY TO SATURDAY, 9 AM – 3 PM WITH THEIR RESUMÉ, 2 COPIES OF THEIR RECENT 2" X 2" PHOTO, NBI CLEARANCE, TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS, LATEST INCOME TAX RETURNS, AND A COPY OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT TO:

PSP BUILDING, 60 Amang Rodriguez Avenue, Corner Marcos Highway, Santolan, Pasig City

POEA 24-HR HOTLINES 722-1144 • 722-1155

A TOP 300 FILIPINO OWNED COMPANY with business interest in shipping, manufacturing, logistics, agribusiness, and real estate is in need of:

TRUCKING MANAGER

Qualifications:

- Graduate of management or related degree
- Relevant working experience minimum of 3 years
- Above average oral and written communication skills
- Handled a business unit with bottom line responsibility is an advantage

Submit resumé to:

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
ESL Building, Bonifacio Drive, Anda Circle, Port Area, Manila
Fax No. (632) 527-3006 • Email: **dane4658@yahoo.com**

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE

Room 507-508, 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines
http://www.deped.gov.ph; ceped-procurementservice@yahoo.com
Direct Line: 636-65-43 / Telefax: 636-65-42 Trunk Line: 632-13-61 Locals: 2065/2115

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee (DepED-BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for printing, delivery, and retrieval and warehousing of test booklets and non-classified material for various testing Projects of NETRC for the 1st Quarter of 2007.

Package	Item	Approve Budget for the Contract (ABC) per Package	Bid Submission deadline/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bidding Document (non-refundable)	End user
1	Printing, Delivery, Retrieval and Warehousing of Test Booklets for the Reading Test in English and Filipino for Grade III	Php 10,006,351.35	February 1, 2007 2:00 p.m. Bulwagan ng Karunungan Rizal 1 Bldg., Meralco Ave., Pasig City	P5,000.00	NETRC
2	Printing, Delivery, Retrieval and Warehousing of Test Booklets for the National Achievement Test (NAT) for Grade VI	Php 9,481,135.14			
3	Printing, Delivery, Retrieval and Warehousing of Test Booklets for the National Achievement Test (NAT) for Year II	Php 15,040,756.76			
4	Printing & Delivery of Test Booklets for the Philippine Validating Test	Php 279,000.00			
5	Printing & Delivery of Non-Classified Materials for the National Achievement Test 2007 & Reading Test for Grade III	Php 2,110,500.00			

Bids received that exceed the ABC per package shall be rejected. A bidder must bid for Packages 4 and 5 if he intends to bid for any combination or all of the Packages 1, 2 and 3. A pre-bid conference shall be held on **January 18, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Meralco Ave., Pasig City. Bidders may submit bids before **February 1, 2007** during office hours to the BAC Chairperson through the BAC Secretariat at the address indicated in the next paragraph.

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting **January 15, 2007** upon payment of the non-refundable fee indicated above.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph, or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at Telephone No 636-65-42/43 or Fax. No. 633-93-43.

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties.

TEODOSIO C. SANGIL, JR.
Undersecretary and BAC Vice-Chairperson

(PDI – Jan. 14, 2007)

PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
(Public Estates Authority)

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE VEHICLES

The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) is offering for sale, on an "as-is, where-is" basis the following Unserviceable Vehicles:

1. Items for Sale

Item No.	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1	1995 Mitsubishi L-200 D/Cab, Pick-up Diesel, Black	P 114,975.00
2	1993 Toyota Corona 2.0 4-door Sedan, Gas, Silver	90,480.00
3	1993 Toyota Corona 2.0 4-door Sedan, Gas, Gray	87,145.00
4	1992 Toyota Tamaraw FX HSPUR, Gas, Blue	47,125.00
5	1995 Toyota Tamaraw FX Wagon, Gas, Blue	43,746.00
6	1991 Toyota Lite Ace Commuter, Gas, White	36,226.00
7	1990 Kia Ceres 4 x 2 HSPUR Diesel, Red	52,700.00
8	1993 Honda Motorcycle 125cc Gas, Red	3,800.00
9	One (1) Lot Junk Unserviceable Motor Vehicles	39,000.00 /lot

2. Interested parties may obtain the Terms and Condition and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) starting January 16 to February 8, 2007 from 9:00 AM to 5:00PM at the Administrative Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati, MM.
3. The first pre-bid conference is scheduled on January 25, 2007 at 2:00PM at the PRA Conference Room.
4. Duly accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms and Conditions shall be submitted to the PRA Real Estates Bids and Awards Committee (PREBAC) on February 9, 2007 on or before 1:30PM. Public opening of bids shall follow at 2:00 PM of the same day.
5. PRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality found therein, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to its interest, without any obligation on the part of PRA to explain the reasons thereof.
6. In the event that the public bidding becomes a failure, the PRA reserves the right to accept proposals for the above items for sale.
7. For inquiries, please contact Engr. Danilo Almoite or Ms. Lilian Tabinga at telephone number 817-47-11 local 174.

MANUEL G. FRANCISCO
Chairman- PREBAC

(PDI–Jan. 13, 14 & 15, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
CITY OF ILOILO

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ARCHITECTURAL/SPACE PLANNING/ENGINEERING DESIGN CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE NEW 7-STOREY ILOILO CITY HALL BUILDING

The Scope of the Design Consultancy work includes among others, soil investigation, preparation of architectural, space planning and engineering design, specifications and drawings, design support services during construction.

1. The City Government of Iloilo, through its Supplemental Budget No. 6, intends to apply the sum of **P12,930,000.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Architectural, Space Planning and Engineering Design Consultancy for the New 7-storey Iloilo City Hall Building at Plaza Libertad, Iloilo City. Bids in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.
2. The City Government of Iloilo, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), now calls for the submission of Letter of Intent (LOI's) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for the architectural, space planning and engineering design consultancy services. Interested consultants must submit their LOI's and accomplished Eligibility Documents on or before January 29, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at the BAC Secretariat, General Services Office, Iloilo City Hall, Plaza Libertad, Iloilo City. Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat for a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00. The date of the opening of Eligibility Documents shall be on January 30, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. at the Legal Office Conference Room, Iloilo City Hall, Plaza Libertad, Iloilo City. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. Only those that are short-listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted LOI's and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) as amended. The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of up to five (5) consultants with a total average rating of at least 80% for each consultant. The criteria and rating system for the short listing are as follows: applicable experience (50%), qualification of personnel (30%) and job capacity (20%).
4. LOI's must be delivered by personal service or through mail to the address stated below on or before January 29, 2007 at 4:00 P.M. A pre-bid conference for shortlisted consultants will be held on February 14, 2007 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at the Legal Office Conference Room, Iloilo City Hall, Plaza Libertad, Iloilo City. Deadline for submission of bids will be on February 26, 2007 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at the BAC Secretariat, General Services Office, Iloilo City Hall, Plaza Libertad, Iloilo City.
5. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only bids from short-listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post qualification.

   The City Government of Iloilo shall evaluate bids using the Quality Based Evaluation (QBE) procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instruction to Bidders.
6. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
7. The Design Consultancy Contract must be completed within One Hundred Twenty (120) days from consultant's receipt of the Notice to Proceed.
8. The City Government of Iloilo City reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or no award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder of bidders.

(Sgd.) ATTY. EDGARDO J. GIL
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

BAC Secretariat
General Services Office, Iloilo City Hall, Plaza Libertad, Iloilo City
Tel. No. and Fax No.: (033) 3368333

(PDI – Jan. 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur

INVITATION FOR BIDS

(CONSTRUCTION OF HAGONOY PUBLIC MARKET)

(The Works include the Construction of 2 Buildings with Comfort Rooms and Waste Control Facilities)

Loan No. 1843-PHI

1. The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank toward the cost of the Mindanao Basic Urban Services Sector Project (MBUSSP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for Construction of the Hagonoy Public Market.
2. The *Municipal Government of Hagonoy* now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Hagonoy Public Market. The works include construction of 2 Buildings with Comfort Rooms and Waste Control Facilities. Completion of the Works is required by 131 calendar days.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," to the extent it is consistent with Asian Development Bank's procurement procedures and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in *"Guidelines for Procurement Under Asian Development Bank Loans."*
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from The Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on January 8, 2007 to February 5, 2007.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00) only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before 5:00 PM of February 5, 2007.
7. The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all eligible Bidders on January 22, 2007 at 1:00 PM. At ABC Hall, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before February 6, 2007 at 1:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Bank Guarantee and in an amount of One Hundred Sixty-Five Pesos (Php 165,000.00) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened on February 6, 2007 at 1:00 PM at ABC Hall, Poblacion, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend the bid opening.
9. To be considered eligible and qualified a Bidder must:
   a. have a successful experience as prime contractor in the construction of at least one (1) work of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Works in the last five (5) years, such being verifiable from completion certificates. To comply with this requirement the single contract cited should be at least Php 5,300,000.00
   b. have a minimum average annual construction turnover over the last three (3) years equal to Php 6.60M.
   c. submit audited balance sheets or, if not required by the law of the applicants country, other financial statements acceptable to the Procuring Entity, for the last five (5) years to demonstrate the current soundness of the applicants financial position and its prospective long-term profitability.
10. Completion of the Works is required by 131 Calendar Days from the start of construction.
11. The Municipal Government of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

OFFICE OF THE BAC CHAIRMAN
Attention: ENGR. JANIRI N. NUÑAL
MUNICIPAL HALL
POBLACION, HAGONOY
DAVAO DEL SUR
CONTACT NUMBER: 09263971244

(Sgd.) ENGR. JANIRI N. NUÑAL
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Jan. 7 & 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Ilocos Sur
Municipality of Sta. Catalina

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: January 14, 2007
Contract No. SP-116-IN-01
World Bank Loan No: 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payment under the Contract for the ***Construction of 516 L.M. Zigzag Seawall.*** Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The ***Municipality of Sta. Catalina, Ilocos sur*** invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the ***Construction of 516 L.M. Zigzag Seawall.***
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting ***January 15, 2007*** at the ***Office of the BAC Secretary (Office of the Sanguniang Bayan), Sta. Catalina, Ilocos Sur*** upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of ***Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00)*** or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after bid opening and must be accompanied by security of ***Nine Hundred Ten Thousand Pesos (PHP 910,000.00)*** in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency, and shall be delivered to the ***Office of the BAC Secretary (Office of the Sanguniang Bayan), Sta. Catalina, Ilocos Sur*** on or before ***10:00 am, February 14, 2007*** at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualifiction stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to he technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post qualification. The **Estimated Project Cost** for the subproject is ***Thirty Six Million Two Hundred Sixty Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Four Pesos and 34/100 (Php 36,260,594.34).***
6. A pre-bid conference will be held on ***February 1, 10:00 A.M.*** at the ***Sanguniang Bayan Session Hall, Municipality of Sta. Catalina, Ilocos Sur.***

(Sgd.) ARTHUR R. REINTENGRADO
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Jan. 14, 2007)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID ON

(CCPBAC-2007-002)

Hiring of Services of a Financial Advisor for the development of the CCP Real Property

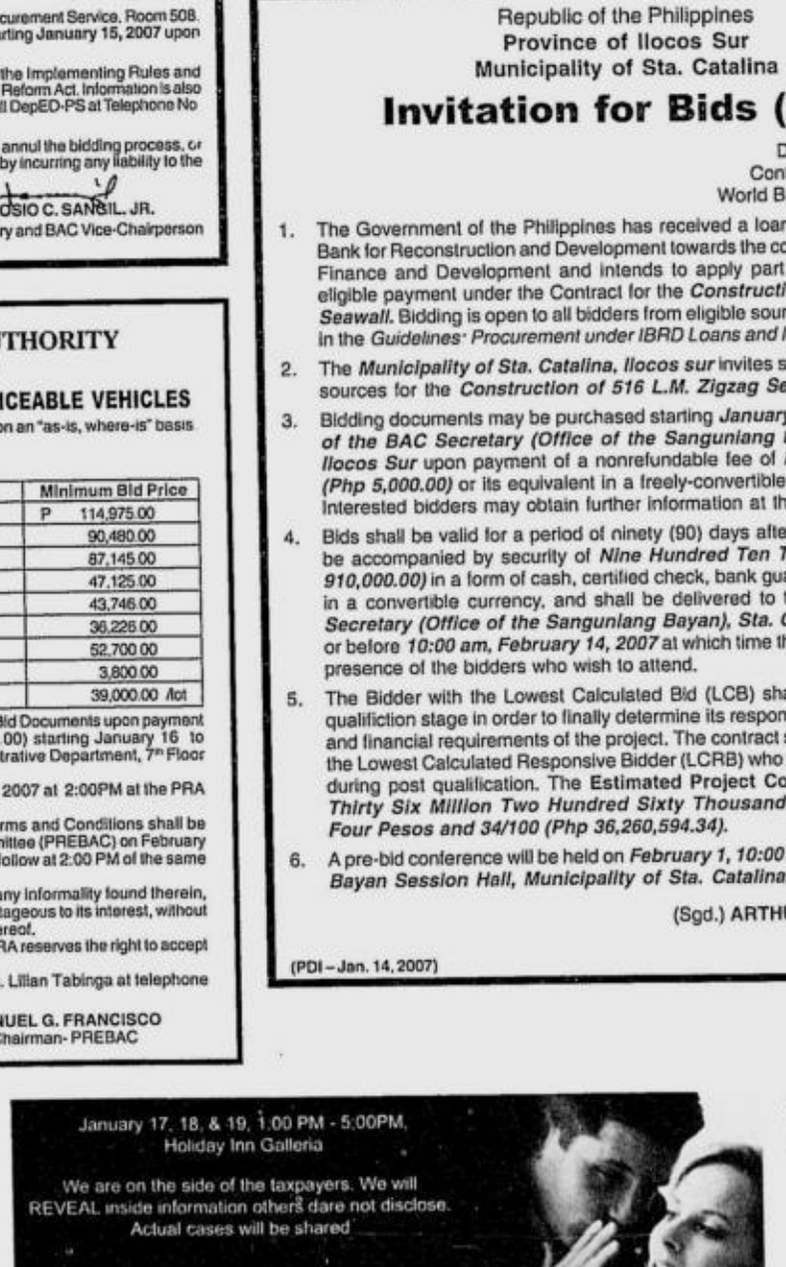
1. The Cultural Center of the Philippines, through its Bids and Awards Committee ("BAC"), intends to procure the services of a Financial Advisor ("FA") for the development of the CCP Real Property.
2. CCP now calls for the submission of Letter of Intents ("LOIs") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Financial Advisory Services. Interested FAs must submit their LOIs on January 26, 2007 from 9:00am to 4:00pm, by hand, and secure the Eligibility Documents and Shortlisting Requirements therefrom for a minimal fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00).

   Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents and Short Listing Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on February 09, 2007; 1:30pm at the CCP Boardroom, 3/F Tanghalang Pambansa. Only those found eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The CCPBAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted Letter of Intent and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The criteria and rating system for short listing are:
4. In accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 ("RA 9184"), bidding for the hiring of an FA will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Only bids from short listed FAs will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents to be obtained from the CCP. The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification. The CCPBAC shall evaluate bids using the ***Quality-Cost Based Evaluation procedure.***
5. The eligibility and short listing requirements and the other bidding documents may be obtained from CCPBAC at the address given below from Tuesdays to Fridays, 9:00am to 4:00pm. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed FAs shall be on February 26, 2007; 1:30pm.
6. The CCP / CCPBAC reserves the right to accept or reject any and all Bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, to declare the bidding a failure, to annul the bidding process without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and to award the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Government.

BAC Secretariat
Cecilia E. Funtinilla
3/F CCP Tanghalang Pambansa (CCP Main Bldg.)
Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
Tel. Nos. 632-832-3667
632-832-1125 local 1106/1107
Fax No. 632-551-5960
Website: www.culturalcenter.gov.ph

(Sgd.) EVA MARI G. SALVADOR
BAC Chairperson

(PDI – Jan. 14 & 21, 2007)



19th CCP Indie film and video tilt

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES IS holding the 19th Gawad CCP Para Sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video (The 19th CCP Independent Film and Video Competition) on Feb. 13 to 16, at the CCP Dream Theater.

The Competition is being held in four categories each for Film and Video, namely, Short Feature, Experimental, Documentary and Animation. Special Awards will be given for Best Regional Entry, Best Full-length Digital Feature, Best Entry based on or inspired by the works of a Filipino National Artist and Best Work Based on Filipino Children's Books. All entries, which may be in 16mm, 35mm film or VHS, VCD, DVD and mini-DV for video are strictly independent works and not produced for commercial screenings.

The Gawad CCP Para Sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video is the longest running indie film and video competition in the Philippines. It seeks to promote Filipino independent filmmaking by giving recognition to the year's most outstanding film and video artists.

Many of today's leading contemporary filmmakers have participated in the Gawad CCP Para Sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video, either in competition or as judges.

Winners of the Competition will be announced on February 16, 2007 at the CCP Dream Theater. For more information, please call CCP Media Arts Division at tel. no. 832-1125 local 1704/05 or visit http://www.culturalcenter.gov.ph

Exsellence Part 2 set

START THE YEAR 2007 WITH A BANG! DON'T miss the national sales rally dubbed as Exsellence Part 2 – Conquering an Enemy called Average slated on Jan. 26 at the Holiday Inn Galleria. Distinguished speakers include Cecilio Pedro, president and CEO of Lamoiyan Corp, Donald Lim, CEO of Yehey.com and president of Philippine Marketing Association; Jos, Ortega, chair and CEO of Brandlab, Jesse Rebustillo, Head of Classified Ads Division of Philippine Daily Inquirer; John Mangun, Managing Director of Aranca Research Phils., Inc; and Rene Espinosa, Managing Director of Porter & Miles, Inc.

The topics include The Selling Games; Inspiring Stories of the World's Greatest Athletes; Selling not just to Win But to Break Records; 10 Record-Breaking Techniques, Internet Marketing Magic, 6 Power Sources in Sales Negotiation, 7 Sales Negotiation Techniques, Quick Tips of Handling Price Objections, Clinch that Sale!

This national event is slated on Jan. 26, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Galleria. It is organized by Porter and Miles, Inc, with office address at Suite 2502-C Tektite Tower East, Ortigas Center. Call Mercy at 638-7719 / 20 for more information / registration.

Sponsors for the National Sales Rally include the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Job Market, Business Mirror, Jobstreet.com, Holiday Inn Galleria, Avon, Yehey.com, Citibank, Disnmor Magnets, INQ7.net, Entreprenuers Society of the Philippines, New Synergy Garments, Apcei and UKDerm Pharma.

UPGRADE 2007: The 17th UP Diliman job fair

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN Office of Counseling and Guidance and the U.P. Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants will be holding UPGRADE 2007, an event designed to benefit both companies and students by providing a common ground between the country's cream of the crop and leading companies.

It is the 18th University Job Fair, from Jan. 22 to 26 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the Ang Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman Campus. Students, especially those who are graduating, from UP Diliman, UP Manila, UP Los Baños, UP Extension Program in Pampanga and other colleges and universities are invited to this grand event.

The organizers will gladly welcome any inquiries regarding this event through the following: Tel. No./Fax No.: 926.4162 or e-mail and send your resumés toupjobfair2007@gmail.com.

You may also contact us through any of the following: 0927-3303691 (Beth), 0918-6160885 (DK), 0916-4460329 (Theresa), 0927-6064730 (Maila), 0917-6100684 (Kristy).

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INVITATION TO BID
FOR THE FIVE (5) LOTS ACQUIRED FROM FORMER REYNOLDS PHILIPPINES CORP.

A consortium of banks composed of the Land Bank of the Philippines, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company, Asiatrust Bank and RCBC Savings Bank (collectively, the "Seller") has acquired the five (5) lots located in Bo. San Agustin, Dasmariñas, Cavite (the "Property") from the former Reynolds Philippines Corporation.

Seller intends to sell the Property through public bidding, and is soliciting bids for the Property. Said bids should be submitted to Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company – Trust Banking Group ("the Administrator") with offices at the 18th Floor, GT Tower International Building, 6813 Ayala Avenue corner HV dela Costa St., Makati City. The bids should be received by the Administrator on or before 12 noon of 07 February 2007.

Bids should conform with the minimum terms and conditions prescribed in the Terms of Reference (TOR) to facilitate an objective and transparent evaluation by Seller. The TOR provides the guidelines in the submission, eligibility, and acceptance of the bid which may be deemed most advantageous and beneficial to Seller.

Description of the Property for sale, as well as its **MINIMUM BID PRICE**, is as follows:

Description		Minimum Bid Price
Five (5) lots with total area of 264,256 sq.m. located in Brgy. San Agustin, Dasmariñas, Cavite, covered by the following TCTs:		P 497,700,000.00
TCT No. 1038287	10,000 sq.m.	
TCT No. 1038286	144,208 sq.m.	
TCT No. 1038288	95,270 sq.m.	
TCT No. 1038289	10,055 sq.m.	
TCT No. 1038290	4,723 sq.m.	
	264,256 sq.m.	

Note: LR Philippines Realty Corporation ("LRPRC") owns two adjacent parcels of land with a total area of 110,707 square meters acquired from its former joint venture partner, Reynolds Philippines Corporation ("RPC"). Said parcels of land are surrounded by the Property subject of this bidding. The Seller has agreed in principle to grant Perpetual Right of Way to LRPRC subject to mutually acceptable terms and conditions. The parties shall exert best effort to complete the negotiations before the sale of the Property. Further, LRPRC has expressed willingness to negotiate for the sale of its properties to the winning bidder, subject to terms to be mutually agreed upon.

A complete set of the TOR and its annexes, which consist of Bid Form, Buyer's Information Sheet, and proforma Letter of Credit will be available starting 15 January 2007 at the 18th Floor, GT Tower International Building, 6813 Ayala Avenue corner HV dela Costa St., Makati City upon payment of a non-refundable registration fee of **PESOS: Five Thousand Only (P5,000.00).**

Bids that have duly complied with the requirements set forth in the TOR will be evaluated and recommended for acceptance by the consortium by **The Evaluation & Awards Committee – Reynolds (TEAC-Reynolds).**

The Seller reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the Seller or call off the acceptance of bids, and call for a new mode of disposal under amended rules. The decision of the Seller is final and binding.

THE EVALUATION & AWARDS COMMITTEE – REYNOLDS
(TEAC – REYNOLDS)

(PDI – Jan. 14, 2007)

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The Distributor will sell, distribute and merchandise our products in specific areas within GREATER MANILA AREA/NORTH LUZON.

We are specifically looking for entrepreneurs who are:

1. Financially sound
2. Willing to manage risks
3. Experienced in managing distribution operations, people and systems
4. Preferably with existing distribution operation with non-competing principals

Interested parties should secure and prepare the following:

1. Letter of Intent
2. Company and management team profiles
3. Financial documents
4. Business permits

Interested parties may submit necessary documents and information to:

COLGATE-PALMOLIVE *PHILIPPINES, INC.*
1049 J.P. Rizal Avenue, Makati City
ATTENTION: Sales Effectiveness Group
Sales Department
Tel. No. 895-1844

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Marbella 2 (Penthouse), Roxas Boulevard near US Embassy
FA = 283 sq.m. (2 BR) 1 unit available

Resd'l Vacant Lot
Adas Park, Pandacan near Coca-Cola Bottlers
LA = 820 sq.m. 1 lot available

MAKATI

Resd'l Condo 2-storey
Cor. Pierce and Medina Sts. near Walter Mart-Pasong Tamo
FA = 71 sq.m. - 86 sq.m. (2 BR) 5 units available

Resd'l Condo Bldg.
Ritz Towers (Furnished) near Rustan's-Ayala
FA = 263 sq.m. (3 BR) 1 unit available

West Towers along Magallanes Bridge
FA = 64 sq.m. - 114 sq.m. (1 BR & 2 BR) 3 units available

Comm'l/Office Space
Dacon Building in front of Nissan Mantrade Showroom
FA = 42 sq.m. - 51 sq.m. (Ground Floor) 2 units available

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House & Lot in Naga City,
Davao City, Zamboanga City and Bataan

QUEZON CITY

House & Lot
Balita Street, West Triangle near SM-West
LA = 657 sq.m.
FA = 441 sq.m. (3 BR) 1 unit available

PARAÑAQUE

Resd'l Vacant Lots
Filinvest Estate Homes near PATTS Sucat
LA = 296 sq.m. - 333 sq.m. 4 lots available

MANDALUYONG

Comm'l/Office Space
Globe Telecom Plaza 1 & 2 near Robinson's-Pioneer
FA = 89 sq.m. - 335 sq.m. 11 units available

PASIG

Office Space
JMT Corporate Condo in front of Podium & SM Megamall
FA = 1,236 sq.m. Whole floor available

CAINTA

Lots (Comm'l/Resd'l use)
Kasibulan Village near MAKRO
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Environmental Management Bureau
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1116
Telephone Nos. 929-6626 to 29
Visit us at: http://www.denr.gov.ph

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that a formal consultation / public hearing regarding the following:

A. Proposed schedule of fines for the violation of the Chemical Control Order (CCO) for ODS (DAO 2004-08) and

B. The draft Memorandum Circular regarding Omnibus Guidelines on investigation, enforcement of preliminary/permanent preventive measures, prosecution, and imposition of fines on the sale, storage, possession, use, manufacture, transport, import or export of ozone depleting substances, and other prohibited acts provided under Republic Act No. 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990), DAO No. 1992-29 (Implementing Rules and Regulation of RA 6969), and DAO No. 2004-08 (Revised Chemical Control Order for Ozone Depleting Substances)

Will be held on January 30, 2007, 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. at (GPH) Operation Center, 2nd Floor, DENR Building, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

For a copy of the draft Memo Circular and proposed schedules of fines, kindly visit our website at **www.emb.gov.ph/philozone/philozone.htm** or **www.denr.gov.ph**

For those who wish to express their opinion and participate in the public hearing, please contact Mr. Onofre Escota of Ms. Khay Pine at telephone numbers 928-1244 or 925-2344 loc. 3 or 4 on or before January 15, 2007.

(Sgd.) ELY ANTHONY R. OUANO
OIC-Director

(PDI – January 14, 2007)

IMMEDIATE HIRING...

...for our expansion requirements

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		TECHNICAL PERSONNEL
		ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN

... male/female, college level with experience on related field, newly graduates, graduates not more than 30 years old are qualified to apply. All positions are available for both our Quezon City Office and soon to open Cavite offices. Please bring your resumé for a brief interview at our screening office at the address mentioned below on January 15 to 17 (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.). Final interview for qualified applicants will be on January 18, 2007. Hiring, briefing and training will proceed immediately the next day.

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- North Forbes Lot 1877m² w/ concrete bungalow/spool

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AUCTION SALE

Marilao-Filipinas Pawnshop, M & R Bldg., Tabing-Ilog Marilao, Bulacan. All Unredeemed Pledges of JUL 2006 will be Auctioned on JAN. 24 8:00am.Lanuza & Sons Auctioneer.
(PDI- JAN. 14, 2007)

Meycauayan-Filipinas Pawnshop,Aliw Complex, Calvario,Meyc.Bulacan. All Unredeemed Pledges of JUL. 2006 willl be Auctioned on JAN. 24, 10:00am.
Lanuza & Sons Autioneer.
(PDI- JAN.14, 2007)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estae of late ALEJANDRO B. BERNATE, JR. was extrajudicially settled among the heirs as per Doc 082 Page 17 Book III Series 2007 before Notary Public Donata C. Manguiat of Quezon City.
(PDI-Jan. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late JUSTO D. TAN was extrajudicially settled among the heirs with waiver of rights as per Doc. 300; Page. 61; Book VI Series of 2006 before Notary Public Atty. Von P. Sto. Domingo of Marikina City
(PDI - Jan. 14, 21 & 28,2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late TOMAS O. DEL CASTILLO, JR. was extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc. No. 337; Page No. 93; Book No. III; Series of 2006 before Notary Public Fortunato C. Pagdanganan.
(Jan. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Florencia Peji-Panganiban was extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc. No. 16, Page No. 4, Book No. III, Series of 2006 before Notary Public Tito S. Fajardo of Pasig City.
(January 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE HUDSON CHUA HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HIS HEIR AS PER DOC. # 210; PAGE # 42; BOOK # V; SERIES OF 2006 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. RICARDO NERI OF MANILA CITY
+PDI-JAN. 14, 21 & 28, 2007

Take notice that the estate of the late NORMA O. GUTIERREZ has been settled by the heirs pursuant to an extrajudicial settlement of estate with Quitclaim being Doc#167 Page#29 Book#XXXIX Series of 2001 of Atty. Rolando D. Mendoza.
(PDI-Jan. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

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NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT ACR #E322119 & CRTS. #038092 BOTH ISSUED ON MARCH 18, 2005 TO NGUYEN NGOC DUC WERE LOST. IF NO CONTEST RECEIVED, NEW CERTIFICATE WILL BE ISSUED.(Jan. 14, 2007)

NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT ACR #E322118 & CRTS. #038091 BOTH ISSUED ON MARCH 18, 2005 TO HUYN NGUYEN VU LAM WERE LOST. IF NO CONTEST RECEIVED, NEW CERTIFICATE WILL BE ISSUED.(Jan. 14, 2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT STOCK CERT. NO. 50872 WAS DECLARED LOST UNDER THE NAME OF MYRA S. SEVILLA. IF NO CONTEST RECEIVED, NEW CERT. WILL BE ISSUED. (JAN. 7, 14 & 21, 2007)

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Atty. Genaro Ignacio Arribe, Sr.

September 19, 1924 – January 12, 2007

He is survived by his bereaved wife **FIDELA UY TIU** and children **Andres III**, **Genaro Jr.**, **Rene**, **Nilo**, **Roberto**, **David**, **Cristina** and **Edgar**, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

His remains lie in state at Chapel J, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever..."
Psalm 23

Lina Lozano Atienza, 70

MANILA SOCIAL WORKER AND CIVIC leader Mrs. Lina Lozano Atienza died on Monday, Jan. 8, 2007 at the age of 70. She was due to turn 71 on Jan. 26, 2007.

Atienza served the Manila Department of Social Welfare for more than two decades until her retirement. After this, she persistently pursued her work particularly for the benefit of senior citizens and unfortunate elderlies.

She was the widow of businessman Benjamin Atienza Sr, and is survived by her children Butch, Bernie, Baltie, Barbie, Aline and Bambi, her children in laws Ruth, Judith, Tito and Boysie, 17 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Her remains lie in state at the Funenaria Paz, Manila Memorial Park in Sucat Parañaque. Interment will be today, Jan. 14 after the 9a.m. Mass.

She lived her life in grace, harmony and tranquil joy.
For the luster she cast on the many lives she touched in her 93 years on this earth,
we remember her with deep gratitude and admiration.

In Loving Memory

on the 1st Death Anniversary of

Ladislawa I. Alcantara

27 June 1913 - 15 January 2006

The Holy Mass will be offered for the eternal repose of her soul at the following:

January 15

Manila Memorial Park, *Sucat, Paranaque*.....3:00pm
San Juan Nepomuceno Church, *Pasay City*.....6:00am
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori, *Magallanes, Makati*.....6:15am
St. Andrew's Cathedral, *Paranaque City*.....6:15am
San Roque Church, *Cabrera St., Pasay City*.....6:30am
Sta. Clara Church, *P. Burgos, Pasay City*.....7:00am
Our Mother of Perpetual Help, *Baclaran, Pasay City*.....9:30am
Santuario de San Antonio, *Makati*.....6:00pm
St. Jude Church, *Malvar Street, Davao City*.....6:00am
Carmelite Monastery Church, *Lanang, Davao City*.....6:00am
San Pablo Church, *Matina, Davao City*.....6:00am
San Isidro Labrador Chapel, *Sto. Nino, Talaingod, Davao del Norte*.....9:00am
Sta. Ana Church, *Sta. Ana Avenue, Davao City*.....12:00nn
Our Lady of the Assumption Chapel, *Alsons Compound Lanang, Davao City*.....3:15pm
San Pedro Cathedral, *San Pedro Street, Davao City*.....5:30pm
Redemptorist Church, *J. P. Laurel Ave., Davao City*.....5:30pm
Assumption Church, *F. Torres Street, Davao City*.....5:45pm
Immaculate Conception Chapel, *Maribulan Alabel, Sarangani Province*.....4:00pm

January 27

Ladislawa Garden Village, *Buhangin, Davao City*.....6:00pm

Death Notices

ANICETA MARTINEZ VICENTE

Peacefully joined our Creator on January 11, 2007 at the age of 85.

She lies in state at Don Bosco Church, Makati City. Interment will be at the Heritage Cemetery, Taguig City today, January 14, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. after the Mass at St. Peter and Paul Parish Church, Poblacion, Makati City.

— oOo —

CRISPINA ALCANTARA MOYA

Passed away on 11 January 2007 at the age of 77.

Her remains lie in state at Capilla D, Arlington East, The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Ave., cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel, Pasig City, and then will be transferred to San Jacinto, Masbate on 15 January 2007.

Interment will be on Saturday, 20 January 2007, at the San Jacinto Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. necrological services and requiem mass.

Corazon Mendoza Farolan

June 13, 1940 - December 9, 2006
Now rests peacefully in the Grace of our Lord.

Her daughters, **Francesca** and **Catherine**, son-in-law, **Michael**; grandchildren, **Marc** and **Max**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal respose of her soul. She is survived by her brothers, **Simon Mendoza Jr.** and **Ernesto**, sister, **Josephine** and brother-in-law **General (ret.) Ramon J. Farolan.**

Her remains were cremated in Seattle, Washington. A memorial Mass will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 7:30 am at the Holy Family Parish, West Capitol Drive, Kapitolyo, Pasig.

Inurnment will be private.

`We, the Family of the late

CHRISTINA ONG YAO,
HOWELL CHRISTIAN O. YAO
and **HUGH CONROY O. YAO**

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 28, 2006,

... praise and thank the Lord for their salvation and for the many lives they touched and blessed....

... wish to express our deepest appreciation to all of you, our friends, near and far, who sent flowers, mass cards, letters of sympathy, spent precious moments with us, and expressed in many other ways your love, concern and support during our time of greatest sorrow.

"God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference."

With much love,
HENRY, HANS & CHARLENE YAO

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Our Beloved

ANDRES BACOSA BAACO

Born on November 30, 1917 in Agutaya, Palawan

Bataan Death March Veteran, 1st Lieutenant, Philippine Army
Provincial Board Member of Palawan (1971-1976, 1984-1998)
Acting Governor of Palawan (1976-1980)
Awardee, Geny Lopez Jr., Bayaning Pamilyang Pilipino (2001)

peacefully joined our Creator on January 8, 2007 in Puerto Princesa.

His bereaved wife **Soledad**; children **Salvacion** & **Arsenio Pascual**, **Valentin** & **Aida Baaco**, **Virginia** & **Jess Catain**, **Sylvia** & **Noli Corpuz**, **Andres Jr.** & **Lilian Baaco**; grandchildren **Aileen**, **Sonia** & **Robbie**, **Alvin** & **Cindy**; **Armand** & **Jenny**, **Andres III** & **Lay**, **Aris**, **Val** & **Adz**, **Allan** & **Sabrina**, **Vina**; **Brian**, **Alain**, **Jesus Jr.**, **Mikhail**; **Lissa**, **Noel** & **Arlene**, **Roberto**, **Cristina**, **Diane**; **Angelo**, **Arlene**, **Ariel**, **Andrea** and great grandchildren request relatives, friends and readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Sampaton Funeral Homes, Baltan St., Puerto Princesa and will be brought to Palawan Provincial Capitol on January 15, 2007. Interment will be on Tuesday, January 16, 2007, 8:30 AM at Puerto Princesa Memorial Park.

Professor Crispin R. Las Marias

(1912-2006)
AGRICULTURIST, EDUCATOR, WRITER/SCHOLAR,
CHAMPION OF FILIPINO VETERANS
Former Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering,
CLSU, Muñoz, Nueva Ecija

Passed away peacefully in Cincinnati, Ohio on April 23, 2006 in the presence of his loving family. He is survived by his loving wife, **Felicitas Addauan**; beloved children, **Manuel** and **Agnes Calimlim**, **Dr. Carlos** and **Corazon Las Marias**, **Drs. Belgrano** and **Aida Cajigal** and **Carol Addauan**, adoring grandchildren, **Malvin** and **Theresa**, **Karen** and **Omar**, **Noli**, **Charlene** and **Carlo**; great grandson, **Ethan** and other relatives.

The body was cremated in Ohio as he wished. His cremains will be brought to La Torre, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya and a mass will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2007 at noon. Mass of Christian burial will be held at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kanlaon, Quezon City at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 27, 2007. Inurnment will follow at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any Identification document (I.D.)
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Corinthians 5:4-5.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2007

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Aries Espinosa**

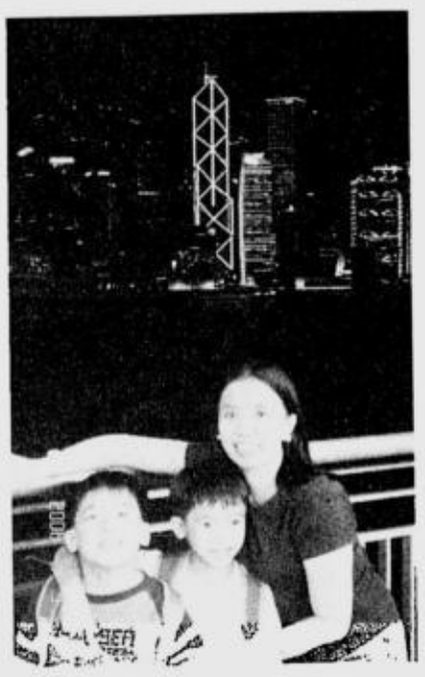
Visa cardholder wins back over P300,000 worth of purchases

THE FIRST OF SIX WINNERS IN Visa's ongoing "The Great Rebate" promotion will be reimbursed for all purchases made on her winning Visa card in 2006 amounting to P355,052.84. Christine Uy, a Citibank Gold Visa cardholder, was the lucky winner during the first electronic draw held last Nov. 21.

Christine, a housewife and mother of four, including 7-year old twins, usually uses her Visa card for family-related purchases such as groceries, children's clothing, school supplies, vitamins and medicines, computer accessories and kitchen appliances.

"For as long as I can remember I've been using my Visa card because it is so convenient and it is accepted in any establishment I go to. I can't believe that I'm actually winning back everything I spent on my Visa card for the year," said Christine. "Thanks to Visa I was able to get nice gifts for my family and friends this Christmas. And of course, I used my Visa card"

A total of six winners will be picked in weekly draws that will be held until



Feb. 2. Each lucky winner will be reimbursed with the total amount for all eligible purchases made on the winning Visa card from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 or one day before draw date, whichever date comes first, up to P500,000 tax free.

The promotion is part of Visa's year-end offer that rewards cardholders for using their Visa cards throughout the year. Visa cardholders who make a single-receipt purchase with Visa for P500 or more from Nov. 12 to Jan. 30 may register the transaction for a chance to enter the lucky draw.

"Visa believes that making payments should be as convenient, secure and rewarding as possible for consumers," said Bob Joubert, Visa International country manager for the Philippines. "The Great Rebate promotion is an innovative and fun way to reward Visa cardholders for their loyalty."

The promotion is open to holders of Philippine-issued Visa Credit, Visa Debit and Visa Electron cards. Cardholders may register via the Internet (www.hbmlasia.com/visa) or by SMS. For SMS registration, cardholders need simply text VISA to 2361 for Globe or 325 for Smart subscribers for full instructions.

PNB TEAMS UP WITH GAWAD KALINGA VS POVERTY IN RP

The Philippine National Bank (PNB) recently forged a historic partnership with non-governmental organization Gawad Kalinga (GK) to provide donations of property, financial assistance, and valuable human resource towards the building of Gawad Kalinga communities all over the country. GK employs a holistic, integrated, and sustainable effort towards nation-building by alleviating poverty - particularly through the planning and construction of decent homes. PNB is set to respond with a corporate approach that will harness the deep-rooted Filipino value of malasakit through the bank's 5,700 employees in more than 320 branches nationwide, from Batanes Island to Jolo. PNB also committed to empower 100 offices overseas to promote Gawad Kalinga worldwide. PNB's unique involvement as one corporate family will provide another step in addressing the problem of landlessness. The partnership with GK is expected to contribute to the work of Gawad Kalinga to reach its target of building 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in seven years. PNB president and CEO Omar Byron Mier (center) poses with Gawad Kalinga executive director Antonio Meloto (second from left) following their MOA signing at the PNB Financial Center. With them are PNB FSVP Ramon Lim (second from right), PNB SVP Christian Jerome Dobles (right), and Gawad Kalinga national coordinator Luis Oquiñena.

UrgenCee now in Rustan's

URGENCEE, THE FIRST-EVER effervescent vitamin C product in the market, is now available in Rustan's Grocery outlets, and Shopwise. Last month, it opened its stalls in Ministop's Makati, Ortigas Center, and Eastwood City. So if you got drenched in rain after work or breathing the same air with a sneezing colleague, just rush to the nearest Rustan's, Shopwise or Ministop for your extra dose of vitamin C.

This breakthrough product from Citrus Well, the vitamin C specialist, is currently the fastest-absorbing vitamin C. Unlike the typical capsules and tablets that gets dissolved only in your stomach, UrgenCee is taken in as a drink so you can absorb vitamin C right away. Just mix the powder with cold water and watch it dissolve quickly. No stirring required. Visit our website at www.urgencee.com for more information.

GMA HONORS BAHRAIN PM

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo poses with His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa (center), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain after conferring the latter the highest form of recognition by the Republic of the Philippines, The Order of Lakandula with the Rank of Supremo (Grand Collar). The award is conferred upon a head of state or government, in memory of Lakandula's dedication to the responsibilities of leadership, prudence, fortitude, courage and resolve in the service of one's people. Witnessing the conferment is Special Presidential Envoy to the Gulf Cooperation Council and AMA Group chair, Ambassador Amable R. Aguiluz V.

Volvo's Brave Dave goes to the movies

VOLVO'S RESIDENT CRASH TEST dummy, Brave Dave, went to see Happy Feet, the latest and coolest musical animation for the whole family last Nov. 22, 24 and 25 at the exclusive Ayala MyCinema at Greenbelt.

The three-day exclusive screening for Volvo owners and their families together with some motoring friends is part of the 12 days of Rewards that Viking Cars Inc is giving as an anniversary gift to its valued patrons and friends. Celebrating its 12th year in the local automotive industry, Volvo Philippines has put together an array of events that will continue to delight its customers and deliver the same dedication in not only preserving, but also celebrating life.

Laid-back and carefree, the event atmosphere is filled with infectious laughter with the antics of the film's characters. Not just another funny animated movie, Happy Feet also tackles the issues of preserving the environment and its inhabitants, including our furry penguin friends in the arctic. Similarly, Volvo, aside from being known for safety, is also a major advocate for taking care of the environment and the world around us. Adding to the fun during the event was the picture-taking session with Brave Dave with kids and parents alike instantly getting a printed snapshot along with bags of goodies from our partner M&Ms. Volvo films about the latest innovations and products of the company was also shown on the widescreen plasma screen provided by the Listening Group of Companies.

The event starts a series of activities that displays Volvo's pursuit of providing the most enjoyable automobile ownership experience for modern families. Confident with the new and exciting models, including the All-New Volvo S80 and C70 as well as the pocket-rocket Volvo C30, Volvo happily tap-dances away to a more dynamic and vibrant year ahead.

SEIBU TOWER: SOON TO RISE

70 percent of Seibu Tower's 284 units are already spoken for, groundbreaking came ahead of schedule. Officiating the ceremony were the heads of the three corporate entities responsible for Seibu Tower, namely Golden Forum Land president Harvard Yu, CE Construction president Johnny Tan and Asya Design Partner principal architect Albert Yu. Seibu Tower, to rise in the heart of Taguig's developing City Center, will be the first and only condominium tower in Metro Manila to offer a 270-degree viewing podium in the master's bedroom of all corner units. It will have 27 storeys of stylish 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units for residential and commercial use, and a full range of amenities right inside the building such as 25-meter lap pool, a children's pool, a walking trail, a health spa, a fitness club, and a roofdeck multipurpose hall. To get a preview of living in Seibu Tower, you may visit the model units at Forum Fort Building, Bonifacio Stopover (beside 7-eleven), Mondays to Sundays, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For inquiries, you may call (632) 816-0912, 0921-2167009, e-mail marketing@seibutower.com, or visit their website www.seibutower.com.

TANDUAY RHUM ON THE ROCK ROLLS ON WITH A BIG BANG

Thousands of spectators jampacked the front areas of Star City in the CCP Complex to watch the first salvo of the 'Tanduay Rhum On The Rock Nationwide Concert Trip' last Dec. 23. Major highlights of the much-awaited event included the sexy song and dance numbers of the vivacious Viva Hotbabes led by Jennifer Lee, Myles Hernandez, Anna Leah Javier and JC Parker and the rousing performances of the country's hottest rock bands, Callalily, Proteinshake, Chicosci, Imago and Pedicab, spearheaded by the young crowd's favorite 6cyclemind. The Star City Concert was the first in a series of 54 concerts which Tanduay Rhum will staged in various localities all over the country in 2007. The events will be mounted in cooperation with Manila Broadcasting Corp and RGMA which operates top-rating radio stations in these areas.

Big spaces... brighter atmosphere

IN THE PAST YEARS, BATHROOM HAS been identified to hygiene. It is said so because this small space at the rear part of the house is meant only for hygienic activities. But through the transitions of technology and lifestyle of every individual, bathroom has started to broaden its horizon and defines as a vanity room. That is why most bathrooms today have separate areas for a particular purpose. Thus, bathroom continues to require bigger space.

In utilizing a large space, one can always fill it with things or simply appreciate the space. It can be filled with design elements and accessories that would not only make an advantage to the space but also to add characteristics to the bathroom's ambience.

Other elements that could enlarge bathroom are through its colors. Light shades of paint or smooth finishing could make a certain space look bigger. Varieties of floor pattern can also aid a spacious bathroom.

Appreciating the space means taking advantage of the spacious area and the natural light. Taking advantage of the space is leaving the vital elements only like the fixtures and some accent pieces. The incorporation of huge picture, windows, freestanding shelves, light colors would also add to the airiness feeling. In dealing with large spaces one can either fill it up with accessories or simply adore the space and leave as it is.

HCG, the leading brand of bathroom fixtures, offers a wide array of products from classic to modern designs with state-of-the-art functions that suit every bathroom need of an individual. To discover more on making your bathroom the extension of one's sanctuary log on to www.hcg.com.ph or visit any HCG distributor nearest you.

ROSEWHITE PROMO WINNERS GIVE DONATION

Beauty for a good cause best exemplified the recently concluded Ganda At Galing Raffle Promo awarding ceremony. Last Nov. 27, RoseWhite had the awarding of its widely participated Ganda At Galing Raffle Promo at the BodyCare Asia Research Inc office in Scout Bayoran, Quezon City. Winners of the said promo were the following: 3rd prize winners of P5,000 were: Marcelita Langam of CDO, Julianito Padilla Jr. of Iloilo, Sonia Balan of Manila, Emerlinda Edillor of Batangas and Lou Ann Campos of Pangasinan. While the 2nd prize winners of P10,000 were Wendelina Yamo of Misamis Oriental, Jocyl Artajo of Davao and Nelly Lomocso of Compostela Valley. Finally, the grand prize winner of P25,000 was Belinda Rosita of Malabon City. In recognition of the Ganda at Galing of Filipino women all over the country, RoseWhite also gave the winners a chance to donate an amount equal to the cash prize they won to a breast cancer foundation of their choice. Among the fortunate beneficiaries were the Philippine Cancer Society and the Philippine Foundation for Breast Care Inc. Shown are (from left) Corazon Onod (consolation prize winner), Belinda Rosita (grand prize winner), Sonia Balan (3rd prize winner).

SANKO LINE SUPPORTS UPGRADING OF BALIWAG MARITIME ACADEMY

The Sanko Steamship Co Ltd (Sanko Line), one of the oldest and leading shipping companies in Japan, formally established its partnership with Baliwag Maritime Academy (BMA), an affiliate under the Baliwag Group of Shipping Companies. Top officials of the two institutions signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Development of BMA last Dec. 8, at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Manila. Under the agreement, Sanko shall provide financial and technical assistance in the upgrading of BMA's baccalaureate programs, training equipment, student and faculty development programs. For its part, BMA will set up a Sanko Class composed of the school's best cadets beginning school year 2007-2008. This class shall receive free tuition, as well as uniform and dormitory allowances. Cadets of this class are assured of their apprenticeship onboard Sanko fleet and their eventual employment after graduation. Shown are Sanko executives led by president Takeshi Matsui and Baliwag Group officials led by president Tengco signing the landmark agreement in the presence of Labor Secretary Arturo Brion.

ProductFiles

C2 for sharing

NOW YOU CAN SHARE YOUR favorite C2 drink with your family and friends. Packed in easy-to-carry PET bottles, the new C2 1 Liter can be enjoyed conveniently anywhere you go. Available in Green Tea Plain, Lemon, Apple and Peach variants, this new liter size gives you four delicious servings of C2's healthy goodness. It is perfect for picnics, parties, outings and other group activities. The fun starts once you share the truly refreshing, cool and clean drink, rich in health-preserving antioxidants that only perfectly brewed green tea can give. Share and enjoy the relaxing and recharging benefits of C2 Green Tea. The bigger, the better for sharing. New C2 One Liter. C2 Share! Now available nationwide.

JOB Market

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2007
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(Commonwealth)

Operations Manager - Financial Account
Team Leaders - Financial and Customer Service Account
Recruitment Specialists
Recruitment Associates
(Makati)

Team Leaders - Collections and Financial Sales Account
(Ortigas)

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(Alabang)

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Be hired for this account and receive a P13,000 HIRING BONUS

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(Makati)

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(Commonwealth, Makati, Ortigas)

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(Makati)

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Commonwealth Office
2/F Diliman Commercial Center, #46 Don Mariano Marcos Avenue, Diliman,
Quezon City
(02)756-7088

Makati Office
Convergys One, 6796 Ayala Ave., cor Salcedo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City
(02)756-7188

Ortigas Office
24th Floor, Robinsons Equitable Tower, #4 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center, Pasig City
(02)857-7678

U-Belt Office
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cor. Padre Campa St.
Sampaloc, Manila
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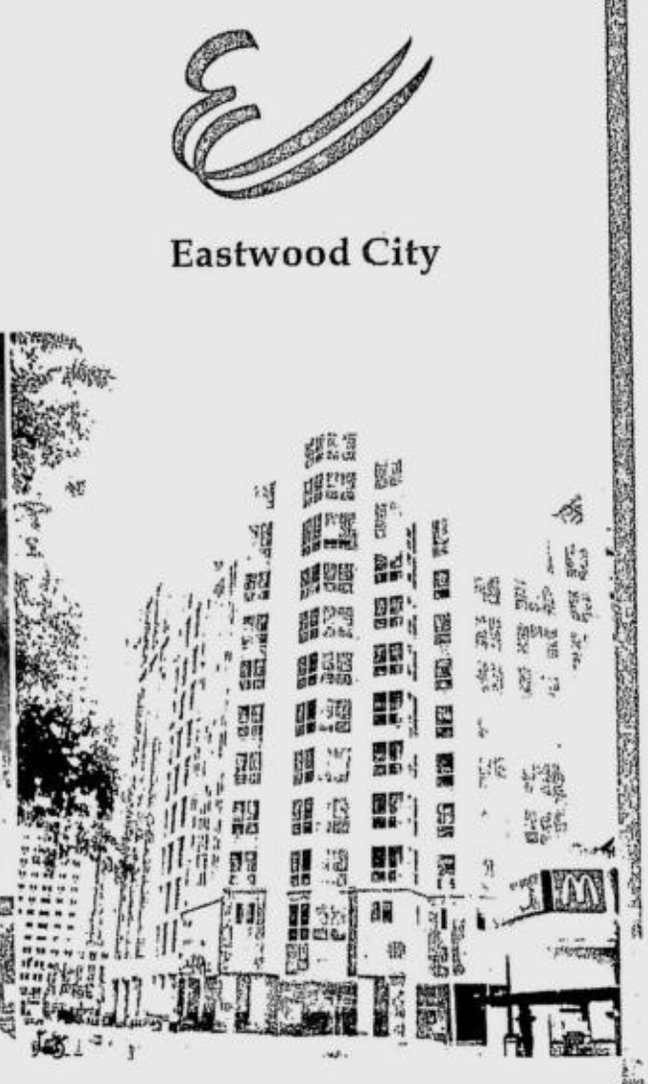

Eastwood City

Eastwood Property Holdings, Inc., the exclusive marketing company for the premier satellite city Eastwood City, invites qualified applicants for the following key positions:

Sales Managers (3)

- Male/female
- 28 to 38 years old
- With at least 2 years' experience as a Sales Manager in real estate and other related industries
- Has the ability and proven track record to manage and lead property consultants toward the achievement of team sales targets
- Can further develop and grow the business

Human Resources and Development Managers (2)

- Male/female
- 28 to 32 years old
- With extensive experience handling all HRAD functions
- Capable of hiring key positions in the organization
- Can work under a high pressure environment with given deadlines

Property Consultants (10)

- Male/female
- Not more than 30 years old
- With a college degree from a reputable school
- With pleasing personality and above average communications skills
- Sales experience in the real estate industry a big advantage

Corporate Training Officers (3)

- Male/female
- 27 to 35 years old
- With 3 - 5 years' experience in conducting programs and developing training modules
- Excellent in oral and written communication
- With high energy and strong motivational skills

Interested applicants should bring a resumé with 2 ID photos and look for:

Ms. Jeannie Iturralde
Human Resources Department
Eastwood City Information Center,
Eastwood City, Quezon City
Or e-mail your resumé to
hrad@eastwoodcity.com.
Call 421-9441 or 421-3961 local 214
for more details.

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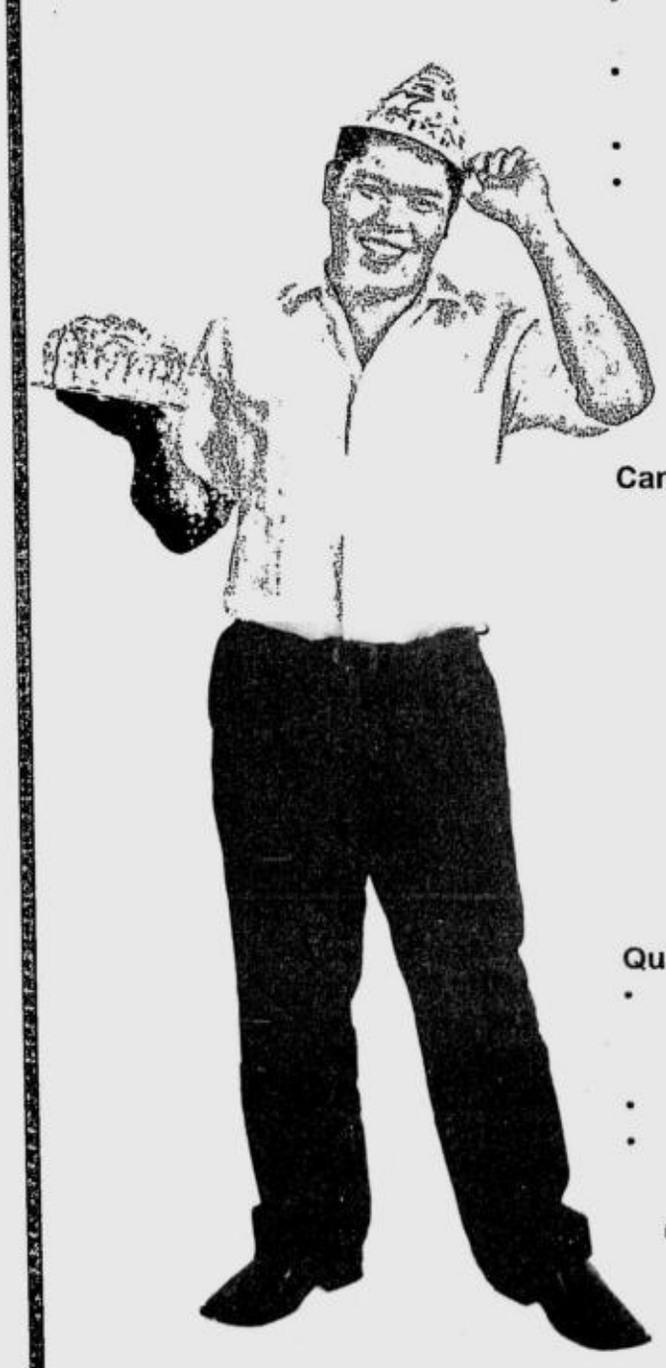

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Customer Service Representatives
Reports Analyst
Team Leader
Quality Assurance Specialist
Operations Manager
Finance Assistant
Learning and Development Manager
Workforce Manager
Human Resources Generalist

Qualifications:

- At least 6 months call center experience handling international accounts
- College Graduate
- Fluent English Speaker

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- With specialization for courses in BS Tourism, BS I.T., AB Media Arts, Business Administration, Psychology, English, Filipino and SPED

TEACHERS (For Basic Education)
- Preferably BEEd or BSEd graduate with specialization in Math, History, English, Reading, English as Second Language (ESL), Early Childhood Education, Chemistry, Science, Home Economics, Art, Music or any related course
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- Preferably with at least 1-yr teaching experience
- Preferably with PRC (LET) License

CHINESE TEACHERS (2)
- Graduate of any 4-yr course
- Well versed in oral and written Pin Yin or Mandarin
- Can communicate in English

COACH / ASSISTANT SPORTS COACH
- For basketball, volleyball, soccer, badminton and futsal

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS (3) and PSYCHOMETRICIANS (2)

SCHOOL NURSES (3)

CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS/ NURSING FACULTY
- With MAN degree or units
- Preferably with at least 1-yr teaching work/ nursing experience

LIBRARIAN
- Graduate of Library Science
- Preferably with PRC License
- With excellent oral and written communication skills

MARKETING COORDINATOR
- With at least 2-yrs supervisory experience in marketing or related field
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- Can work well under pressure

MARKETING / PR ASSISTANT
- Graduate of any business, mass communications or marketing course
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- With pleasing personality and related work experience
- Can work well under pressure

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS (5)
- Graduate of BS Accountancy, Psychology, Statistics or Marketing
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- Proficient in computer applications

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Qualified applicants are requested to send curriculum vitae, transcript of records and recent 2x2 photo to Human Resource Office, Southville International School and Colleges, 1281 Tropical cor. Luxembourg St., BF International, Las Piñas City. Tel. Nos. (02) 8200935 or 8200973 loc 106/164 or e-mail us at sisc_hiring@yahoo.com.ph.

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- Senior management level
- Preferred minimum three (3) years experience with good track record as lead account officer on any of the following: financial analysis/corporate banking/investment banking projects
- 30-40 years old
- Results oriented
- Graduate of any business or finance course
- Marketing driven and must be able to immediately bring in clients

Those interested may call Leslie – 867-3316

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We are currently looking for talented self-motivated & goal oriented professionals to fill in the following positions:

WEB PROGRAMMER
- Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science / Information Technology / Computer Engineering;
- Should be adept of the following programming languages:

Primary - NET Programming, PHP, JAVA, Oracle, Microsoft SQL, MySQL, IBM DB2

Secondary : C#, Visual Basic, HTML Applications and other Programming Languages

- Knowledge in Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Flash or Dreamweaver is a plus.
- Familiarity in SMARTCARD Technology is also an advantage.

FLASH PROGRAMMER
- Bachelor's Degree Graduate
- Proficient in Flash Programming and Animation
- Knowledge in Adobe and other Macromedia Products is an advantage.
- Knowledge in .NET Programming, PHP, JAVA, Oracle, Microsoft SQL, MySQL, IBM DB2 etc. is a plus.
- Can work with minimum supervision
- Creative

You can submit your application thru:
E-mail - **hrd@jimec.ph**
(Please indicate position as your e-mail subject.)
or
Mail to **First IT Center, 7373 Bakawan St., San Antonio Village, Makati City.**

SAN BENILDO INTEGRATED SCHOOL
De La Salle Supervised
Grade School and High School Department
Marcos & Sumulong Highway, Rizal
is in need of:

1. **Grade School & High School Teachers (all subjects)**
2. **Librarian**
   - Should have PRC license
   - With at least one year teaching/working experience
3. **Guidance Counselors**
4. **Property Custodian**
   - Must have completed two years of college/ graduate of any vocational course
   - Must be computer literate
5. **HRD Clerk**
   - Preferably Psychology graduate
   - With at least one year experience
6. **Business Office Clerk**
   - Preferably graduate of B.S. Accounting
7. **Secretary**
   - Four year secretarial course/office management course
   - At least one year experience in school setting
8. **Records Office Clerk**
   - Any four year course

Applicants should bring the following:
- Application letter
- Transcript of Records, PRC license and other professional credentials
- Birth Certificate/Baptismal Certificate
- Photocopy of TIN/SSS B-1/E Form/ Community Tax Certificate
- Police Clearance/NBI Clearance
- (2) 1x1 pictures/Recommendation from previous employer

Only with those complete requirements will be scheduled for an interview:

For inquiries please call:
681-17-18 (Grade School)
660-81-05 (High School)
480-67-03 (High School)

CARE - Philippines, a nongovernment humanitarian organization fighting poverty, is searching for qualified candidates for the following positions:

1. **PROJECT OFFICER** for St. Bernard, Southern Leyte
2. **PROJECT OFFICER** for Dingalan, Aurora
3. **PROJECT ASSISTANT** for St. Bernard, Southern Leyte
4. **PROJECT ASSISTANT** for Dingalan, Aurora
5. **PROJECT ASSISTANT** (Metro-Manila based)

The work primarily involves the implementation of CARE Philippines' Community-based Disaster Reduction Project under the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Program. The project staff will ensure the quality implementation of the project, accomplishment of all project and program deliverables, and will manage their particular Field Office. As part of the DRM Program Team, they will take part in project reporting, monitoring, evaluation and documenting best practices.

Applicants should have at least a bachelor's degree and 3 years relevant experience in social development, preferably in the area of disaster risk management. They must possess good analytical skills, the appropriate values consistent with social development work, competent written English, good communication and interpersonal skills and be computer literate. Email **arcilla@care.org.ph** for full details of the job description, qualifications, and application process. This item will be for one year. Submit application by **January 21, 2007** to: The DRM Program Director, CARE Philippines, 3rd Flr. Luisa II Bldg., 107 Maginhawa St., Teachers Village, Quezon City 1101, Tel. Nos. 9288246/56 or to **arcilla@care.org.ph** (application should indicate the particular position and location being sought). Previous applicants will still be considered and need not resubmit application.

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LANEMAN MECHANICS

Male, w/ computer and electrical background, 5'3 height, w/ pleasing personality, w/ experience, 25-38 years old, at least College level.

SALES CLERK / CASHIER

Female, w/ computer background, 5'1 height, w/ pleasing personality, w/ experience, 23-30 years old, at least College level.

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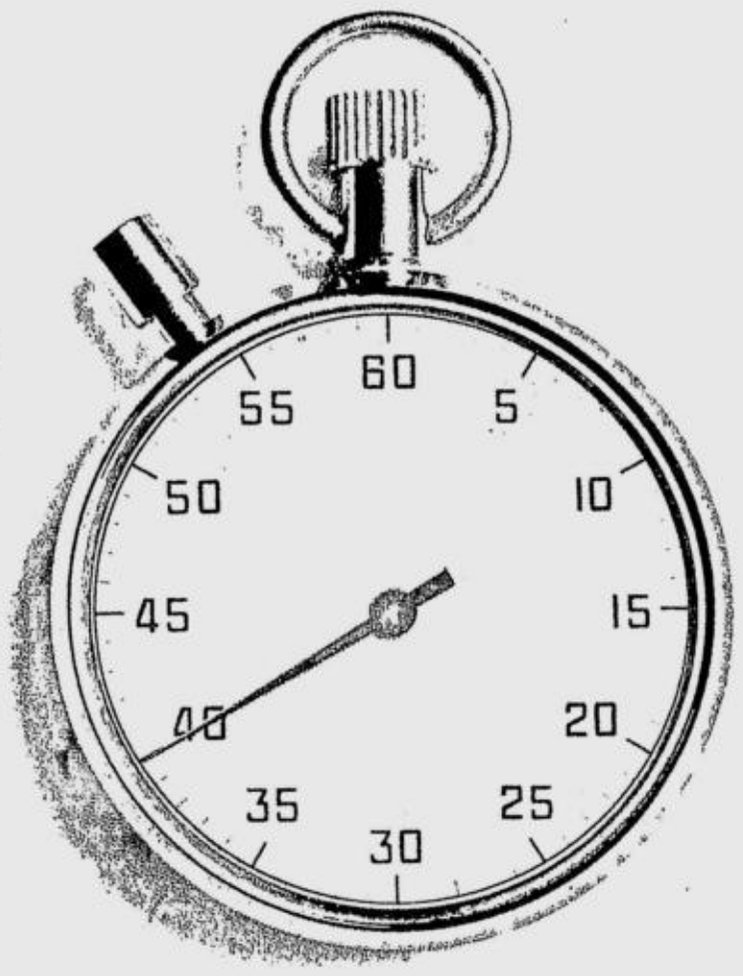

Attend our in-house job fair between January 15 - 19 or take our online test today. Join Accenture by January 31 and receive a special P15,000.00 signing bonus.

We know the importance of creating the right environment for success. At Accenture, you can develop your skills faster than almost anywhere else. We're one of the world's leading management consulting, technology services and outsourcing companies and we help our clients become high-performance businesses. We're now building a customer contact services team in the Philippines and we want talented people to join us.

Customer Contact Agents.

Whether you are a call center professional, someone looking for a new challenge or a recent college graduate, get your career off to a great start.

We're looking for 4-year degree holders with excellent communications skills for our inbound and outbound contact center operations. As a customer contact agent for our ISP client, you will provide technical support and handle billing inquiries. For those with outbound or financial services experience, you can be part of a pioneer account performing outbound collections and inbound customer service for a UK based utilities company.

At Accenture, you will be given diverse career options and learning opportunities to help you realize your full potential. Once hired as a customer contact agent, you will receive comprehensive training to prepare you to work at the highest level of efficiency. And as you grow in the organization, you'll enjoy the benefits of a continuous learning program to help you develop specialized skills and facilitate your personal and leadership growth. On top of these, you will receive a competitive total rewards package, including pay-for-performance incentives.

Visit our job fair from January 15 to 19, 2007, 10am to 3pm at 3rd level, Robinsons Pioneer Mall, Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. You could walk away with a new job on the same day!

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TWO (2) FEMALE RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGISTS
ONE (1) ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
ONE (1) MASTER ELECTRICIAN
ONE (1) AUTOMOTIVE/DIESEL MECHANIC
TWO (2) NURSING AIDES
ONE (1) LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Please bring the following: Resumé, 2x2 Colored Picture, NBI/Police Clearance, PRC ID, Board Rating, Board Certificate, Transcript of Records, and Diploma. Kindly submit your requirements together with the original documents to the Personnel Office, Ground Floor, Main Building.

PLATINUM CARE II
CAREER EXPO

PLATINUM-CARE.COM CORPORATION partnered by Canadian Companies which offer jobs in various positions in Alberta (Canada) invites you to attend our INFO SESSION on January 26, 2007 at Tri-Place Hotel along 2 Alabama Street cor. E. Rodriguez St., Quezon City.

1st session – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 n.n.
2nd session – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Speakers from Platinum-Care Toronto, Canada will talk on the job opening like:

OIL, GAS & MINING
HOSPITALS & HOMECARE (caregivers)
LIVE-IN/OUT NANNIES
HOTEL & RESTAURANT
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION & etc.
PSW / PCA & MANUFACTURING

Registration Fee of Php 350.00 / participant.
Interested participants please confirm your registration to:
EMMA – 0919-4225120 / 0927-3234497 / (02) 2714757
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Opportunities in Business Process Outsourcing Professionals

Operations Manager
(Reference Code: PDIOM 0114)
We are looking for an Operations Manager who has 7 to 9 years of related experience. Two years of this experience must be in outsourcing, shared services and operations. Graduates of a four-year degree course who have been supervisors for three years are welcome. Candidates must be experienced in coaching, mentoring, meeting and monitoring established Service Level Agreements. They must also have budget preparation experience preferably gained in the following industries: Life Insurance, HMOs, banks, outsourcing and telecom companies. Working on graveyard shifts and during Philippine holidays must not be a problem.

Team Lead/Senior Team Leads
(Reference Code: PDITL 0114)
We are looking for candidates with 5 to 7 years of related experience in outsourcing, shared service and operations. They must at least have 2 years supervisory experience, strong leadership qualities and analytical skills. Candidates must coach, mentor and be able to handle at least 15 to 20 subordinates. Above average communication skills is a basic requirement. Working on graveyard shifts and during Philippine holidays must not be a problem.

Reports Analyst
(Reference Code: PDIRA 0114)
We are looking for candidates with experience in providing reports and executive summaries. Candidates must have advanced skill in Microsoft Excel and other reporting tools. 1 to 2 years experience in an outsourcing/BPO company is preferred.

Finance Lead
(Reference Code: PDIFA 0114)
We are looking for applicants who have at least 5 to 7 years related experience, who have spent at least 2 years in outsourcing, shared services and operations. Position is open to graduates of a four-year degree preferably Accounting, Business or Math who have at least worked for 1 to 2 years in the management field. Candidates must be experienced in handling financial management including planning, forecasting, budgeting, reporting and analysis. Successful candidates are expected to do coaching and mentoring of subordinates.

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Somerset Juffair, Manama City is located near the coast in Juffair, an exclusive residential area, home to many young expatriates, with some of the finest dining locations in Bahrain. It overlooks the bay of Al Muharraq Island, and offers its residents a scenic view of Manama City, the capital of Bahrain.

Somerset Corniche, Doha is located in West Bay, the new district in Doha and the new commercial centre of Qatar. It overlooks the coast and offers a scenic view of the Arabian Gulf, and is a short walk to the City Center Mall, one of the largest shopping complexes in the Gulf region.

Both properties join a chain of serviced residences managed by Ascott International – a member of The Ascott Group, the largest international serviced residence owner-operator outside the United States with close to 18,000 serviced residence units in key cities of Asia Pacific, Europe and the Gulf Region. It operates the Ascott, Somerset and Citadines brands in 46 cities across 20 countries.

In line with our aggressive growth, an explosion of exciting opportunities exists for exceptional individuals with the capacity, aspirations and passion to excel. Exciting opportunities exist for aspiring candidates to join us at Somerset Juffair, Manama City or Somerset Corniche, Doha as:

Heads of Department (HOD)

Assistant Residence Manager / Guest Services Manager

You will be responsible for ensuring the efficient operations of the property, and supervising the provision of excellent customer service and good rapport with guests and visitors.

Housekeeping Manager

You will be responsible for planning, organizing and supervising a pool of Housekeeping supervisors, contract cleaners and maintenance crew.

Engineering Manager

You will be responsible for managing and supervising a team of Engineering supervisors to ensure that engineering operations are in accordance with company standards, legislation and regulations.

Security Manager

You will be responsible for supervising a group of Security supervisors to ensure the day-to-day safety and security of residents and staff.

Supervisors / Operations Staff

Guest Services

You will be responsible for providing efficient guest services, handling all telephone communications, general enquiries & requests, and maintaining good rapport with guests and visitors.

Housekeeping

You will be responsible for the ensuring the proper care, cleanliness and maintenance of guest rooms and public areas.

Engineering

You will be responsible for the maintenance of the building and services operations, and presentation of the property in accordance with company standards, legislation and regulations.

Security

You will be responsible for the day-to-day safety and security of residents and staff.

Others

Sales Manager / Executives

You will be part of the sales team focusing on achieving sales targets, increasing revenue and market share for the residence.

Finance/Accounts Officers

You will assist in the establishment and management of the Finance Department, and day-to-day operations relating to accounts payable/receivable functions.

Administration/Procurement Officer

You will be responsible for providing effective and efficient office administration and maintenance support. In addition, you will be responsible for managing the procurement activities for the property.

Human Resource Manager / Executive

You will be involved in the full spectrum of Human Resources – recruitment, compensation & benefits administration, employee relations, training and development and office administration.

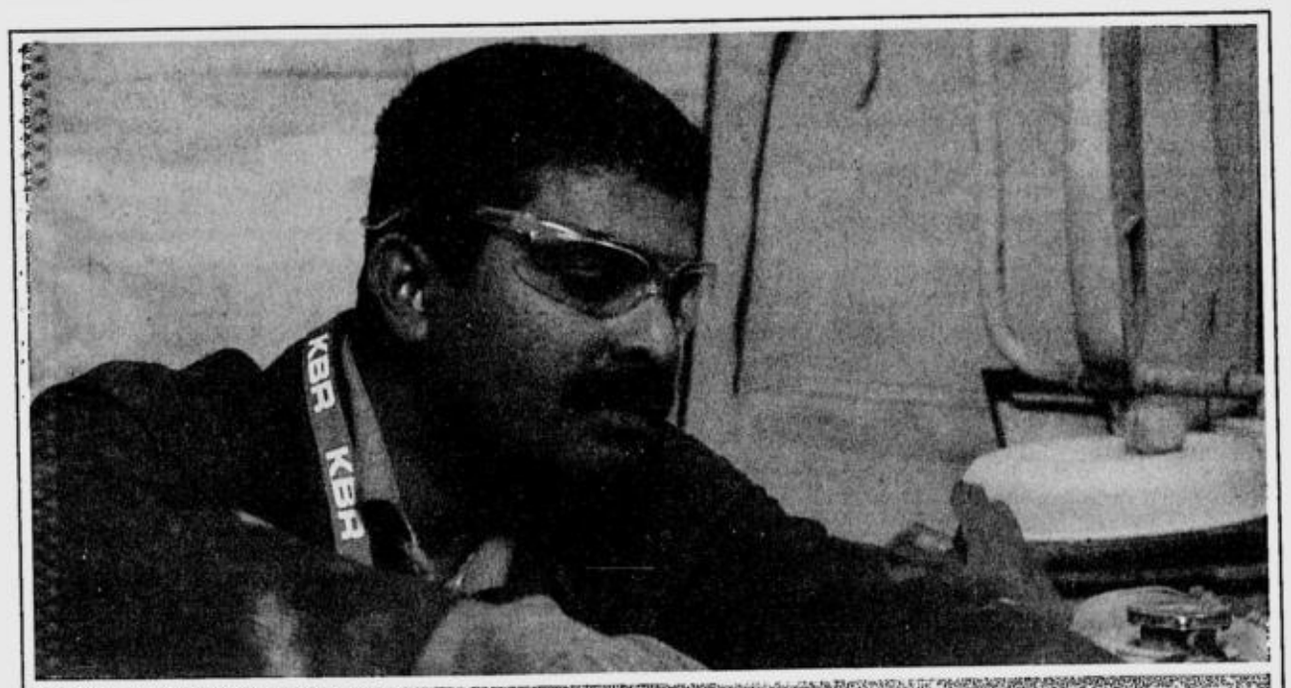
Requirements:

- Relevant experience in apartments or hotels is necessary for all roles. HOD - at least 6 years, Supervisors – at least 4 years and Operations Staff – at least 2 years.
- For the Other functional roles, you should have at least 3 years of relevant experience
- Good spoken and written English is a must for all roles. Literacy in Arabic is advantageous.

If you have what it takes to make a difference to the success and future of our group, submit your resume with a recent photograph to us online at **www.the-ascott.com/hrms/csg** by **19 January 2007** or to:

The Human Resources Manager
Somerset Serviced Residences, Philippines
No. 104 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village
Makati City 1229 Philippines

Only shortlisted applicants will be notified.



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Institutional Shareholder Services, Inc., A US-based Company, is the world's leading provider of Proxy Research, Advisory, Voting Services, and Corporate Governance Research. It has been the core mission of ISS to build shareholder value for institutional investors and corporations. With over 15 years of experience in Corporate Governance, ISS serves more that 950 institutional and corporate clients throughout North America and Europe.

Continually growing through the years, ISS- Manila office is seeking dynamic and competent individuals to fill in the positions of:

RESEARCH ANALYSTS

- Candidates must possess a Bachelor's degree in Economics, Finance, Business, Political Science or any related courses.
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply. However, experience in research is an advantage.
- Must have excellent oral and written communication skills, analytical with strong attention to details, has keen sense of judgment and goal-oriented.
- Must be a self-starter and is internally-motivated, adaptive, tenacious, resilient and resourceful.
- Proficient in the use of web-based and Microsoft Office applications.
- Can work individually and within a group.

*College graduates who can write and speak fluently in any of the following Foreign Languages: **French, Korean, Mandarin and Spanish** and meet the above requirements may apply for the analyst position as well.*

***Research Analyst applicants** may apply personally. Please be at the office at 9AM to be accommodated.*

SOFTWARE TEST ENGINEER

- Candidates must possess a Bachelor's degree in any computer science courses
- Experience in design, development and execution of behavioral and structural testing, producing test scenarios and test cases based on requirements, specifications and documentation a must.
- Must have 1 or more years of experience with automated testing tools such as the Mercury Test suite or the Rational suite, SQL, defect tracking and report tools and scripting tools as well as with JavaScript, HTML, XML and web development.
- Must be knowledgeable with Software Life Cycle methodologies such as RUP, AUP, CMM or SDLC, performance testing, reliability testing, quick risk analysis, change management and testing standards.
- Must have very good oral, written communication and planning skills, strong organizational skills and attention to detail, flexible
- Must have leadership potentials and career-driven
- Able to work effectively in a global team environment with remote management and handle multiple priorities and projects of varying scope.

Address:
Human Resources Department
28th Floor PhilamLife Tower,
8767 Paseo De Roxas,Makati.
Email address: **nazarene.rubi@issproxy.com**

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

HR and ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

* male/female, not more than 35 yrs of age, graduate of any behavioral or business related course, proficient in computer application, has substantial experience in recruitment / compensation / benefit and for HR position and administrative function

BILLING and ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT

* male/female, not more than 35 yrs of age, graduate of any business related course/accounting graduate an advantage, proficient in computer application, has substantial experience in the said field.

NIGHT SHIFT PERSONNEL

* male, not more than 35 yrs of age, at least college level, with professional driver's license and typing skills.

COMPANY DRIVER

* male, not more than 35 yrs of age, at least college level, with professional driver's license, knowledge in basic automobile trouble shooting is an advantage and familiar in Metro Manila routes.

Applicants residing near Alabang is necessary.

Qualified applicants may mail their updated resumé attached with recent picture at:
Box # 001 c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer-Alabang 2007

B&M Global Services Manila

We are a young and dynamic organization providing support services to a law firm with more than 70 offices in 38 countries around the world. Our continued growth demands the expertise of professionals. If you see yourself working as part of a global organization driven by a passion for excellence, then we would like to hear from you.

Graphic Designer

The person hired will execute desktop publishing and design work to reflect the correct application of the Firm's visual identity program. The ideal candidate is an enthusiastic team player with strong communication skills and a technical aptitude in design programs including QuarkXpress, Photoshop, Illustrator and Adobe Acrobat in a Windows environment.

The ideal Graphic Designer candidate must meet the following credentials:

- Bachelor's degree in marketing, design or equivalent certificate in desktop publishing
- 2-3 years of experience in graphic design
- 1-3 years of experience in desktop publishing (using QuarkXpress)
- Ability to prepare digital files from raw data for online deployment and prepress output
- Good understanding of Microsoft office suite
- Strong oral and written English, and analytical skills
- Excellent organizational and follow-up skills
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy
- Ability to prioritize and work with limited supervision

Web Content Specialist

The person hired will complete daily content updates to our global public web site on behalf of the marketing network. He/she will also play an important supporting role in completing longer-term projects and enhancements that improve the site's usability.

The ideal Web Content Specialist candidate must meet the following credentials:

- Bachelor's degree in business, marketing, communications, journalism or English
- Minimum of one year experience managing web content and design in a professional setting
- Minimum of one year experience drafting and editing web copy
- Intermediate or better knowledge of HTML
- Minimum of one year experience using WebTrends or similar usage reporting software
- Proficient in MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy
- Strong oral and written English (spelling, grammar) skills
- Strong analytical skills
- Excellent organizational and follow-up skills
- Ability to prioritize and work independently with limited supervision

Document Support Centre Specialist - Voice File

The job involves transcribing of digital voice files consisting of dictations, recorded meetings, legal proceedings and seminars. Successful candidates will be provided training in the software and equipment used in transcriptions.

Document Support Centre Specialist - Word Processing

The job holder will be responsible for word processing assignments, including copy-typing, document formatting and editing, document conversion, scanning, Excel and PowerPoint. Thoroughness in work and attention to detail is critical. Candidates must be thoroughly familiar with Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and have above average typing speed.

The ideal DSC Specialist candidate must meet the following:

- Degree holder with good academic standing
- Good command of the English language
- Relevant work experience is an advantage but fresh graduates are also considered
- Highly proficient in MS Office Applications
- Keen ear and good attention to details
- Team player, with good sense of customer service values
- Excellent work attitude
- Willing to be assigned to shifts

English Editor

The job entails reviewing writing styles and grammar of legal documents which may include e-mail, letters, memoranda, contracts and agreements. The successful candidate must have excellent English skills and relevant experience in any of the following: teaching English, copyediting, corporate communications and writing.

The ideal English Editor candidate must meet the following:

- Bachelor's Degree with good academic standing
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English
- Ability to work with tight deadlines
- Must have good attention to details
- Highly proficient in MS Office Applications
- Willing to be assigned to shifts

Qualified applicants may submit their cover letter, resume, 2x2 picture and other credentials to bmgsm.hr@bakernet.com by January 26, 2007. Please indicate the position you are applying for in the e-mail subject line.

Asia Netcom is a major pan-Asian provider of advanced telecommunications services to multinational enterprises, ISPs and carriers. The company operates a wholly-owned regional submarine cable system and an extended global service platform that power a full portfolio of corporate infrastructure, Internet and next-generation networking solutions. The company has been recognized as being at the forefront of the industry by winning Frost & Sullivan's Data Communications Service Provider of the Year for 2005 and 2006.

We are seeking high-caliber individuals equipped with strong telecommunications engineering experience to join our operations team. Qualified candidates should be highly-motivated, able to multi-task, and demonstrate a high level of flexibility and initiative in a fast-paced environment.

AsiaNetcom

Successful candidates will fill positions in the following areas

- **Network Surveillance**
- **Fields Operations**
- **Service Delivery/Provisioning**
- **Technical Project Management**
- **Local Access Management**
- **International Tax Manager**
- **Corporate Accountant**
- **Financial Analyst (Bill Audit Team)**
- **Accounts Payable Officer**

General Job Requirements:

- Degree or Diploma in Engineering or telecommunications-related discipline or relevant experience.
- Minimum 4 – 6 years experience in the telecommunications industry with at least 3 years working with Subsea / Terrestrial / SDH / DWDM networks.
- Good communication skills (both written and verbal).
- A team player able to work effectively with employees at all levels of the Network Operations team.
- Well-developed analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to set priorities, recognize root causes, and recommend solutions.
- Ability to work under pressure.
- Take initiative and work with minimum supervision in a fast-paced environment.

Specific requirements for Network Surveillance positions are:

- Experience and knowledge of working inside Network Operations Centers on a 24/7 shift roster.

Specific requirements for International Tax Manager position

- Relevant professional qualifications with a Bachelor or master degree in accounting or Taxation
- Strong business/commercial sense, cheerful, pleasant, team player, flexible, result oriented. Possess positive attitude with high level of energy, drive, initiative, and enthusiasm. Willing to explore new ideas and opportunities. Able to work independently. Matured with a "can do" attitude.
- Excellent managerial/ leadership, organizational, analytical and verbal/written communication skills. Exhibit ability to listen and communicate effectively.
- The ability to thrive in a fast paced environment
- Good computer skills, proficient in all MS Office applications, hands on experience in SAP will be an advantage.
- Practical working knowledge of tax (preferably both direct and indirect tax), accounting principles and practices as well as related financial areas or equivalent experience.
- At least 10 years of working experience in tax of which 4 years with industry experience and knowledgeable in cross border international tax and transfer pricing regulation.
- Mandarin language proficiency is an added advantage.
- Strategic thinker yet a hands-on person.
- Experience in dealing with CITQ outside of Philippines and working knowledge of tax in the major Asia Pacific countries.

Specific requirements for Corporate Accountant

- Relevant professional qualifications (CA/CPA or equivalent). Strong accounting technical knowledge. Minimum 4 years experience in MNC. Shared Service Centre experience is a plus.
- Experience in co-ordinating audits and handling external auditors.
- Analytical, cheerful, pleasant, team player, flexible, detail and organize, result oriented. Possess positive attitude with high level of energy, initiative, and enthusiasm. Willing to explore new ideas and opportunities. Able to work independently. Matured with a "can do" attitude.
- Good computer skills, proficient in all MS Office applications, hands on experience in SAP will be an advantage.
- Practical working knowledge of tax (preferably both direct and indirect tax).
- At least 5 years of working experience in accounts of which 3 years is with public practice preferably knowledgeable external statutory audit and consolidation for US listed companies.

Specific requirements for Financial Analyst position

- Degree or Diploma in Business, Accounting or Finance related fields.
- 2+ years of working experience in telecommunications or Bill Audit function is preferred.
- Good Verbal and written communications skill in English and Cantonese are essential. Mandarin is an advantage.
- Strong analytical skill and able to work under pressure.
- A good team player yet able to work independently.
- PC literate, Microsoft Office skills is a must.
- Good understanding of financial system. Working knowledge on SAP is highly desirable.
- Immediate availability is preferred.

Specific requirements for Accounts Payable Officer position

- Relevant professional qualifications (CA/CPA or equivalent). Strong accounting technical knowledge. Experience in mergers and acquisition or consolidation will be a plus.
- Experience in co-ordinating audits and handling external auditors.
- Analytical, cheerful, pleasant, team player, flexible, detail and organize, result oriented. Possess positive attitude with high level of energy, initiative, and enthusiasm. Willing to explore new ideas and opportunities. Able to work independently. Matured with a "can do" attitude.
- Good computer skills, proficient in all MS Office applications, hands on experience in SAP will be an advantage.
- Practical working knowledge of tax (preferably both direct and indirect tax).
- At least 5 years of working experience in accounts of which 3 years is with public practice preferably knowledgeable external statutory audit and consolidation for US listed companies.
- Shared Service Centre experience is a must.

Interested applications are invited to forward their resumes to the following email address:
recruitment@asianetcom.com

All information supplied will be treated as strictly confidential for the purpose of selection and recruitment.
Only short-listed candidates will be notified; for candidates not selected, we would like to thank you in advance for your interest in a career in Asia Netcom.

CHALLENGING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Our clients are Philippine Special Purpose Vehicles of a global emerging markets financial institution in the business of acquiring and managing financial assets and properties from the banking system.

We are now hiring for the following positions for outstanding candidates:

ACCOUNT MANAGERS AND SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGERS

- The job will entail management, servicing and disposition of financial assets, formulation of strategies for business opportunities involving these assets, and establishing relationships with prospective investors.
- The various positions will require at least 5 years relevant experience in account management and/or restructuring, financial asset servicing, and corporate finance in a reputable institution. Those with strong financial analytical skills will have an edge.
- The job will be fitted for highly motivated and hardworking candidates with excellent communication skills, high proficiency in Microsoft Windows programs, admirable work ethics, and can work independently.

PROPERTY SPECIALISTS AND SENIOR PROPERTY SPECIALISTS

- The job will entail management, servicing and disposition of real estate properties, formulation of strategies for the development and disposition of these properties, and dealing and negotiating with prospective buyers, developers and investors.
- The various positions will require at least 5 years experience in property administration, management, sales and disposition in a reputable financial institution or real estate company. Those with strong financial analytical skills will have an edge.
- The job will be fitted for highly motivated and hardworking candidates with excellent communication skills, high proficiency in Microsoft Windows programs, admirable work ethics, and can work independently.

We are also pooling for the following positions: Financial Analysts, Accountants, Lawyers and Administrative Staff.

Attractive financial rewards and career advancements await the right candidates.

Please email your resumes with pictures at: Claberkleys@ yahoo.com.ph or send your resumes with pictures at Charles Langley Andrews Berkley and Company c/o One Mckinley Place, 26th Street. Crescent West. Bonifacio Global City. Fort Bonifacio. Taguig City.

Senior Legal Operations Assistant

Responsibilities

To assist in coordinating the projects and other assignments for the Assistant General Counsel, and to perform a range of well-defined clerical and administrative duties; handling documents and information of a confidential and/or sensitive nature.

For more details about the position, please see http://www.adb.org/Employment/Local/default.asp

Reporting Arrangement

The position reports to the Assistant General Counsel.

Selection Criteria

Specific criteria include

- suitability to undertake the responsibilities mentioned above at the required level.
- Bachelor's degree, preferably in business administration, commerce, management, accounting or other relevant discipline.
- 5 years relevant work experience.
- Good working knowledge of ADB and its mission.
- Good understanding of the role and function of an in-house legal department.
- Proficiency in standard software applications required. Familiarity with multilateral organizations' database system is an advantage. Excellent typing skills; ability to operate transcription devices preferred; good knowledge of stenography is an advantage; excellent command of written and spoken English, including good composition, editing and proofreading skills.
- Ability to work with individuals from different cultural/national backgrounds.
- Good interpersonal and communication skills.
- Strong ability to handle sensitive information requiring confidentiality and to exercise judgment of matters requiring urgent attention.
- Ability to work independently and with minimum or no supervision, and maintain composure under pressure.
- Ability to manage priorities and workload with general schedule of work, instructions and standardized practices.
- Ability to oversee activities and delegate administrative responsibilities promptly.

The Asian Development Bank's vision is a region free of poverty. Established in 1966 and headquartered in Manila, Philippines, ADB's multicultural staff come from over 50 member countries. ADB's Headquarters in Manila generally recruits its administrative staff locally from the Philippines. The position is for a three-year fixed-term appointment. ADB offers a highly competitive salary and benefits package applicable to local staff. While the position advertised is for ADB Headquarters in Manila, Philippines, ADB staff must be prepared to serve in any location outside its Headquarters at the discretion of Management.

Apply electronically, quoting **Ref. No. EXT-AS07-012(4)-OGC** and **job title** on subject line and attaching application form available on www.adb.org/Employment/appform.asp to e-mail address: CS-jobs@adb.org by **29 January 2007**.

Due to the expected large number of applications, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Applications lacking the job reference number and job title or using the wrong e-mail address will not be considered.

Asian Development Bank ADB

www.adb.org

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
NOTICE OF JOB VACANCY

VACANCY NO. 2007/01 - SC
DATE ISSUED 14 January 2007
CLOSING DATE 26 January 2007

POST TITLE : **Travel Administrator**
ENTRY LEVEL : G6
OFFICE AND LOCATION : UNDP Manila
TYPE OF APPOINTMENT : Service Contract (SC) issued by UNDP

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES :

Under the overall direction and immediate guidance of the Manager of the Development Support Services Center (DSSC), the Travel Administrator will closely monitor and oversee the day-to-day performance and functioning of the common UN travel services provider, ensuring their compliance to their contracted obligations, and facilitating the delivery of the highest level of service quality to all the UN Agencies.

The said results shall be achieved by undertaking the following :

- Act as the immediate supervisor of a team of Travel Consultants, Reservations and Documentations Assistants employed by the company engaged by the UN as its official travel service provider, who shall all be situated within UNDP as an in-plant travel agent;
- Provide professional guidance, mentoring, leadership and managerial interventions aimed at ensuring the highest quality of service to the UN travelers on the full range of services provided by the common UN travel agency;
- Regularly conduct a thorough, direct and close coordination with the travelers and travel focal persons of each client UN agency under the inter-agency arrangement;
- Conduct and facilitate regular coordinating meetings with all the agencies to present reports, make position and recommend courses of actions on any travel-related issues that need resolution;
- Acquire, within a brief period of time, an outstanding grasp of the travel policies of the UN agencies and the detailed contractual arrangements of the UN with the Travel Agent, and implement them accordingly, while rendering creative problem-solving actions as and when needed;
- Conduct, on a regular and periodic basis, the following :
  - Ensure timely submission and accuracy of contents of all reportorial requirements of the UN agencies from the travel agency, including review of transaction details as invoices arrive, aimed at ensuring the accuracy of information, to minimize errors when they are sent to the Finance Units of respective UN agencies;
  - Conduct periodic performance evaluation surveys among travelers and travel focal persons across all UN agencies based on the UN Service Level Standards, consolidate and analyze its results, submit actionable recommendations to the OMT and the Travel Agent, and introduce modifications on daily routine based on the recommendations and results of performance reviews;
  - Implement improvements based on customer feedback, daily lessons learned and best practices, acquired during the course of the contract implementation;
  - Facilitate, if needed, the delivery of accurate, complete, high quality and timely services for specific transactions, specially those that are challenging or needing thorough and more detailed/careful attention.
- Regularly monitor the competitiveness of the rates being applied to the UN relative to other prices, promotions, and new products offered in the travel market; advise the UN of deviations and changes that will keep it abreast with the market, and negotiate of the best rates, if necessary, in order to the UN gets the best value for money possible;
- Benchmark with other institutions with comparative travel volumes and needs (e.g. WHO, ADB, WB, etc.) for new market practices, new technologies, and trends in travel services, and submit appropriate recommendations to OMT for possible application among UN agencies.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS :

- Bachelor's degree in Tourism, Management, Accounting, or related fields;
- At least 5 years experience and Knowledge in the travel industry, as supervisor of a travel agent or in an international airline;
- Operating knowledge and experience with global reservations systems definitely an advantage;
- Outstanding client service orientation, with excellent interpersonal skills with an ability to deal with people at all levels;
- Well-developed organizational, analytical, planning, negotiating, problem-solving skills, coupled with emotional maturity;
- Computer literate with extensive knowledge of Windows-based applications;
- Excellent oral and written English communication skills;
- Exposure with the UN, other international organizations, or other multi-cultural, multi-racial environment will be an advantage.

The selected candidate will receive a salary that is commensurate with his/her background and work experience.

Applicants are requested to complete the UN Personal History Form (P.11), available in our website **www.undp.org.ph/jobs/** and send to:

Human Resources Unit
United Nations Development Programme
30th Floor, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue
Makati City

indicating the Vacancy No. and Post Title on or before 26 January 2007. Kindly note that only completed P11 forms will be reviewed.

UNDP is an equal opportunity employer.
Please note that we will contact only the short-listed candidates.

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Opening doors, creating opportunities

We are looking for suitably qualified and experienced individuals to join our team of IELTS Examiners.

You will need:

- An undergraduate degree or a qualification which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to an undergraduate degree.
- A recognised qualification in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- At least 3 years full-time (or equilavent part- time) relevant TESOL teaching experience (post-certificate level qualification)
- The required professional attributes and interpersonal skills.

idp www.idp.com/philippines

Submit applications to:

The Administrator
IDP Education Australia
2/F Pioneer House Makati
108 Paseo de Roxas
corner Legazpi Street,
Legazpi Village, Makati City
1229 Philippines

Tel. (632) 816-0755
Fax (632) 815-9875

Website: http://www.idp.com

Closing date for applications:

January 31, 2007

IELTS is jointly owned by the British Council, IDP IELTS Australia, and University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations.

www.ielts.org

FOUNDATION FOR THE PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT
Fostering Partnerships for the Environment

The Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), an Environmental Fund for NGOs and POs, is urgently looking for qualified individuals to fill the position of

PROJECT OFFICER

Who shall assist, in a proactive manner, in the development, assessment and monitoring of projects in the areas of assignment; and support the Regional Operations Manager in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Regional Operations Plan.

The candidate must have the following qualifications:

- Possess a degree in forestry, agriculture, natural sciences, social sciences (sociology/anthropology), environment science and management, development communications, community development or any related course.
- Have at least three years experience working in a non-government organization (NGO), peoples organization (PO) and with communities specifically on design, analysis, monitoring and review of sustainable community-based resources management programs, development and application of policies and laws on the environment
- Have an adequate level of fitness to withstand the need to travel to assigned project sites for monitoring and evaluation in Luzon

Skills and abilities:

Must be fluent in dialects / languages in Luzon with emphasis on Ilocano Northern languages. Proficient in use of computer software / MS Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint). Adept in oral and written communication for the purpose of negotiation, networking and linkaging.

The successful candidate engagement shall be for an initial maximum five-month contract with a potential continuing permanent employment.

Applicants must be received on or before January 26, 2007

Mail complete:

- Application letter
- resumé
- diploma and transcript of records
- photocopy of your SSS ID and Tax Identification Number with latest 2x2 colored photograph to:

The HRDA UNIT
FOUNDATIONS FOR THE PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT
77 Matahimik Street, Teachers' Village, Diliman, Quezon City
fpe-hr@fpe.ph

For Immediate Employment

TOURS SUPERVISOR

- Male or Female
- With extensive background in inbound / outbound tours operation of a travel agency
- At least 28 years old but not more than 40
- With booking and ticketing experience
- Excellent communication, planning and organizing skills
- Salary negotiable

TOURS ASSISTANT (2)

- Male or Female
- Between 23 to 30 years of age
- College graduate
- With travel related work experience
- Preferably with ticketing experience
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Computer literate

RESERVATIONS /TICKETING OFFICER (2)

- Male or female, not over 30 years old
- Experience in air ticket reservations an advantage
- Computer literate
- College graduate

ACCOUNTING STAFF / BOOKKEEPER

- Female
- Between 23 to 30 years of age
- Graduate of Accounting course
- At least 2 years relevant work experience
- Computer literate, knowledge of Abacus S-BOSS an advantage

SALES EXECUTIVE / SUPERVISOR

- Female, not over 30 years old
- College graduate
- Preferably with travel related work experience
- With good communications and interpersonal skills
- Computer literate

Interested applicants may send their Resume with recent 2x2 picture to:

REGENT TRAVEL CORPORATION
Regent Bldg., 1415 Gen. Luna Street
Ermita, Manila
Attn: The Personnel Officer
or
e-mail to info@regenttravel.com.ph

TSM SHIPPING (PHILS.), INC.

IS IN NEED OF TECHNICAL PURCHASERS :

Possible candidate will be

- A young engineer with few years of experience at sea (preferably bulk carriers) who would like to start new career ashore
- A younger person with fair experience in purchasing / logistics

Candidates must be good in

- English / spoken and written

and they must be

- Proficient in IT technology (MS application) and
- Good communicators

Purchasing requires **dedicated** persons who can **work under pressure** and on tight time schedules

There are four things that candidates will need to learn

1. our system and procedures
2. our proprietary purchasing software (ShipNet and ShipServ)
3. The market (suppliers / forwarders etc) .... and of course
4. Vessels that they will support

Please submit in person your resume with photo together with certificate of employment for possible interview.

Mr. Ian R. Garcia - Admin./Personnel Manager
ian.garcia@tsmphil.com.ph
TSM HOUSE 1747 Dian St., Palanan, Makati City
Tel. No. 860-7575

For your Classified and Obituary Ads please call:
635-0219

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

PELCO II, a billion peso electric cooperative is in need of the following for immediate hiring

1. HRD Head

- Industrial or Behavioral Science Background, Org. Development Practitioner
- Preferably residing within PELCO II covered areas, but not required
- With at least 5 years experience in HR function
- Proficient in oral and written communication
- Strong Analytical and Interpersonal skills

2. Junior Accountants

- Must be CPA
- With excellent communication and analytical skills
- Knowledge in office IT and preferably in enterprise-based systems
- Fresh graduates are welcome

3. Corporate Planning (CORPLAN)

- Post Graduate Degree or equivalent
- At least 7 years experience in Corporate Planning preferably in the Power Industry
- Willing to relocate within PELCO II covered areas
- Above Average managerial, technical analytical and marketing competencies

4. Electrical Engineer

- Licensed Registered Electrical Engineer
- With background or experience in a Distribution Utility; Power Substations or Metering facilities
- Preferably with a valid driver's license
- Must be computer literate (Microsoft Word, Excel and/or AutoCad)
- Knowledge in the construction of power distribution lines is an advantage
- Resident of PELCO II area coverage

Interested applicants should send their Curriculum Vitaé (not faxed) to:

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
The Manager
Administrative Department
San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga
Email: Pelco_2@yahoo.com

CLOTHMAN KNITTING CORPORATION

URGENTLY NEEDS

BUILDING MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

- Male, between 30 to 40 years old
- Graduate of Business Administration, Mechanical/ Civil Engineering graduate
- With experience for at least 5 years

CHIEF ACCOUNTANTS (Sta. Mesa base)

- Female, not over 40 years old
- Must be licensed CPA
- With minimum 3 years experience to the same position preferably in a Manufacturing setup
- Knowledgeable in all facets of Accounting & in the preparation of FS & Government reports

COMPUTER PROGRAMMER

- Female, between 24 to 30 years old
- BS Computer Science graduate or related
- With at least 2 years experience in networking environment, VB, SQL Server, Hardware trouble shooting and ISP.
- Proficient in Computer Programming

ELECTRICIAN

- Male, between 25-30 years old
- Master Electrician graduate
- Knowledgeable in repairs/troubleshooting of Industrial Circuit Machine and panel board control
- Willing to work on extended hours
- With at least 2 years experience in the same field

Qualified applicants may send their comprehensive resumé w/ picture and TOR to:

The Human Resources Development Division,
57 Don Pedro St., Don Pedro Village Marulas,
Valenzuela, M.M. or e-mail to clothman@easycall.com.ph
Fax No. (632) 291-5686

JIMAC INCORPORATED

Total Point Of Sales (POS) SYSTEM PROVIDER

IMMEDIATE HIRING

PROGRAMMERS

- Bachelor's /College Degree in Information Technology or any related courses
- Can Program in either of the following; **DELPHI, TURBO C / TURBO C++ / TURBO PASCAL** and **CLIPPER,** Experience in **SQL CLIENT/ SERVER Environment** is an advantage.
- Can Program in **Linux Environment** using **TURBO C/C++;** Background in Web Designing, **PHP, HTML and MYSQL** is an advantage.
- Able to solve problem analytically, creatively and effectively and a Team player.

SYSTEM CONSULTANT (SALES)

- Male or Female with pleasing personality
- Must be a graduate of B.S. Marketing / Business Management degree or any related courses.
- Must be able to think logically and well-organized.
- A self-starter, organized and self-driven person; works to achieve agreed sales targets and objectives and result-oriented person.
- Must have excellent oral and written communication, presentation and negotiation skills.
- Well-oriented in all facets of Customer Care Service is an advantage.
- Background on Retail Business Operations is an advantage.

SYSTEM SUPPORT

- Either a graduate of Computer Engineering or Computer Science Courses or any related courses.
- Proficient In PC Troubleshooting, Software Installation and PC Network Configuration.
- Able to relate with customers with courtesy and develop rapport.
- Able to solve problem analytically, creatively and effectively.
- Has good oral and written communication skills
- Willing to assist client and work on extended hours / weekends and Holidays as needed (On-call status).

Interested applicants may apply personally or may send their resume with recent photo at the E-mail address stated below: Kindly indicate the Position applying for as the Subject.

JIMAC, INCORPORATED
HRD DEPARTMENT
Penthouse floor TC Plaza Building near cor. Cordillera St.
Quezon Ave., Quezon City.
Tel No. 742-68-32/53/59- loc. 112 Fax No. 742-6634
E-mail address: **hrd@jimac-inc.com**
visit our Website at **www.jimac-inc.com**

BANK OF MAKATI
A Rural Bank

Kabalikat Mo Sa Bawat Pangarap

50 years

The Biggest Rural Bank in the Country

Invites Qualified Applicants for the following positions:

MICROFINANCE AFFILIATE

GENERAL MANAGER (Job Code – 001)
- with at least 2 years experience in microfinance lending
- with excellent leadership and management skills
- proficient in oral and written communication

BRANCH BANKING

BRANCH MANAGERS (Job Code – 002)
for Antipolo, Cabanatuan, Davao, Lipa, Malolos, Tuguegarao and Vigan
- with at least 3 years work experience in bank operations and marketing
- with strong communication and leadership skills
- results oriented and with a knack for building strong relationships with clients

BRANCH OPERATIONS HEADS (Job Code – 003)
for Cabanatuan, Cainta, Cebu, Davao, Lipa, Tuguegarao and Vigan
- with at least 1 year work experience in bank operations in a supervisory or first level officer capacity
- with excellent customer relations skills

TELLERS (Job Code – 004)
for Cabanatuan, Caloocan, Davao and Lipa
- experience as a branch staff/associate an added advantage
- with pleasing personality and good communication skills

LOAN PROCESSORS (Job Code – 005)
for Cabanatuan, Caloocan, Davao and Lipa
- with basic knowledge of loans
- systematic and attentive to details

CONTROLLERSHIP AND INTERNAL AUDIT

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT HEAD
(Job Code – 006)
- Accounting graduate; CPA an advantage
- with 5 years bank accounting experience
- with experience/working knowledge in tax planning and management
- with strong communication and analytical skills

AUDITORS/ACCOUNTING STAFF (Job Code – 007)
- with knowledge of internal control, branch operations, audit techniques and principles
- Accounting graduate; CPA an advantage

CORPORATE PLANNING

CORPORATE PLANNING HEAD (Job Code - 008)
- with 3 years of relevant experience in Corporate Planning
- with sharp strategic planning and other key managerial skills

GENERAL SERVICES

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HEAD
(Job Code – 009)
- with adequate working knowledge in purchasing, construction and renovation
- with good negotiation skills
- values and principle – centered

SECURITY OFFICER (Job Code – 010)
- with at least 2 years experience in law enforcement or police matters
- with unquestionable integrity and good moral character

HUMAN RESOURCES

TRAINING SPECIALIST (Job Code – 011)
- willing, able and ready to design, facilitate and coordinate training and development programs
- with strong people orientation
- proficient in oral and written communication

HRD STAFF (Job Code – 012)
- graduate of Psychology or Behavioral Science
- with working knowledge in job analysis and performance evaluation
- proficient in oral and written communications

COMPANY NURSE (Job Code - 013)
- registered nurse
- experience as a nurse in an office setting will be an added advantage

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

PRODUCTION SUPPORT DEPARTMENT HEAD
(Job Code – 014)
- with working knowledge of Unix Systems and MS Windows Servers
- with at least 3 years experience in IT Support Operations

PRODUCTION SUPPORT ENGINEERS
(Job Code - 015)
- with working knowledge of Unix Systems and MS Windows Servers
- graduate of BS Computer Engineering or other related courses

APPLICATIONS SYSTEMS ENGINEERS
(Job Code - 016)
- with working knowledge of Oracle or SQL server, Java and/or VB, HTML and/or XML
- graduate of BS Computer Science or other related courses

LOANS AND CREDIT

ACCOUNT OFFICERS FOR HOME LOANS/ SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE LOANS
(Job Code: 017)
- with 5 years experience in promoting and marketing of home loan facility, SME's and large scale business loans
- proficient in oral and written communications

CREDIT OFFICER (Job Code – 018)
- with high level of understanding of the credit evaluation process with solid exposure in financial analysis
- with strong analytical and written communication skills

ACCOUNT MONITORING/SPECIAL ACCOUNTS ASSOCIATES (Job Code - 019)
- with experience in credit investigation and/ or handling of problem accounts
- with motorcycle driving skill

Interested and qualified applicants may send their letter, resume with 2x2 photo and transcript of records to:

Human Resources Department
Bank of Makati (A Rural Bank), Inc.
No. 44 Sen. Gil Puyat., Makati City
or email to: rbmi_ho@yahoo.com

Please indicate the job code of the position applied for in your application letter.

The LEADING retailer of locally handcrafted sterling silver jewelry is in need of MANAGERS for

NCR and SOUTH LUZON

Interested applicants may send their comprehensive resumés and other pertinent documents to:

ONE PHILIPPINE SILVER CORPORATION

#33 Don Doroteo St.,
Don Enrique Hts.,
Commonwealth Ave., Q.C.
Deadline of submission:
26 Jan 2007

Qualifications:

- ✔ Bachelor's Degree holder (priority is given to Business Administration graduates or equivalent degrees)
- ✔ Reasonable experience in sales, management, marketing and customer relations
- ✔ Versatile, highly motivated, result-oriented, organized
- ✔ Excellent oral, written and interpersonal communication skills
- ✔ Willing and physically able to travel to do field work

Our company is an ISO 9001:2000 Certified Engineering Design Consultancy and Construction Management Firm. For more than 24 years, ESCA has developed and expanded its services to meet the increasing demand of a wide range of clientele here and abroad. We take pride in taking care of our PEOPLE and using the latest TECHNOLOGY in delivering e-ENGINEERING SERVICES that are at par with the world's best.

BE A WORLD CLASS ENGINEER ! BE AN ESCA ENGINEER !

Set your CAREER on track!

A rewarding career with a great company. A rare opportunity to join a strong, experienced and focused team.
Great culture, great projects.
If you have the drive to succeed, we want you to be a part of our team.
We are in search for TOP CALIBER and PROACTIVE individuals to fill in the following positions:

STRUCTURAL DESIGN ENGINEERS - Registered Professional; Knowledgeable in STAAD Pro, ETABS, STRAP and other engineering design software; Must have at least 2 years relevant engineering design experience; Experience in industrial facilities such as power plants, cement plants, refineries and precast concrete design and detailing; Previous experience on US projects an advantage but not necessary; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision; willing to be assigned anywhere

CIVIL WORKS DESIGN ENGINEERS - Registered Professional; Knowledgeable in AutoCAD and Autodesk Land Development Desktop; Must have at least 2 years relevant engineering design experience; Previous experience on US projects an advantage but not necessary; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision; willing to be assigned anywhere

ASST. PROJECT MANAGER Registered Civil Engineer; With strong 5 years relevant experience in Project Construction and Management; Knowledge in design techniques, tools and principles involved in a project; Excellent communication skills; Ability to work and deliver on under pressure, priorities, deadlines, to do multitask and handle multiple projects; Strong leadership and management skills; willing to be assigned anywhere

PROJECT ENGINEERS - Registered Civil Engineer; With extensive 3 to 5 years experience in Project Construction and Management; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision; Willing to be assigned anywhere

MECHANICAL ENGINEERS - Registered Professional; Minimum of 3 years relevant experience; Knowledge in HVAC & Fire Protection System design; Knowledge in quantity take off, cost estimates, quality control and quality assurance procedures; Knowledge in AutoCAD and MS Office Applications; Ability to interpret MEPS working drawings; Ability to work and deliver on under pressure, priorities, deadlines, to do multitask and handle multiple projects Well-versed in documentation, writing reports and correspondences; Willing to be assigned anywhere

SANITARY ENGINEERS\ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS - Registered Professional; Must have at least 3 years relevant experience; Knowledge in AutoCAD and other engineering design software; Knowledge of design techniques, tools and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, drawings and models; Ability to work and deliver on under pressure, priorities, deadlines, to do multitask and handle multiple projects; willing to be assigned anywhere

X STEEL DETAILERS - BS Architecture or Civil Engineering course graduate; Knowledgeable in X Steel software; Must have at least 6 months relevant experience; Can produce structural steel fabrication outputs; Experience in industrial facilities such as power plants, cement plants, refineries and precast concrete design and detailing; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision; willing to be assigned anywhere

X STEEL DETAILING MANAGER - BS Architecture or Civil Engineering course graduate; Registered Professional a plus factor; With at least 5 years in coordination and management of steel detailing or design projects; Minimum of 5 years hands on experience in working with X-Steel (Tekla software); strong background in structural drafting and detailing; Strong management skills; Excellent in communication skills

CADD OPERATORS - BS Architecture or Civil Engineering course graduate; Proficient in the use of AutoCAD, Architectural Desktop, 3D Studio or any engineering\architectural\mechanical software; Must have at least 2 years relevant experience; Experience on precast concrete detailing an advantage; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision; Willing to be assigned abroad

ARCHITECTS - Registered Professional; Must have at least 3 years relevant experience; Creative in conceptualization; Proficient in AutoCAD\Corel and other architectural software; Can prepare plans from Design to Construction; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision; Willing to be assigned anywhere

TRAINING MANAGER Registered Civil Engineer; Must have a minimum of 2 years experience in teaching professional civil engineering subjects in a university; Has experience in civil construction project management; With experience in using the computer for solving civil engineering problems; With strong management and supervision of conducting training courses relative to civil engineering; Knowledge in the analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation of the training modules for the online training

ACCOUNTING CLERKS Graduate of BS Accountancy; Must have at least 3 years relevant experience in bookkeeping and accounting procedures; Knowledge in MS Office Applications and Accounting System; Resourceful and very keen to details; With good communication skills and can work with minimal supervision

Successful candidates await great and rewarding employment career opportunities & a chance to travel abroad.

If you believe you are the ideal candidate,
you may apply personally or send your updated resume with application letter to:

ESCA INCORPORATED
ENGINEERS · CONSULTANTS · PROJECT MANAGERS

The Human Resources Department
3rd Floor ATC Centre, 148 Katipunan Avenue,
St. Ignatius Village, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 4371218 \ 4371219 \ 9139879 \ 9139920
Fax No. 4371217
Website: www.escaengineers.com
Email: hrd@escaengineers.com

TUV SUD

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

HINGE INQUIRER PUBLICATIONS, a dynamic company engaged in the publication of the most influential niche magazines today, is in immediate need of the following:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

The Account Executive will have a primary responsibility of acquiring advertising placements for assigned Hinge Inquirer Publication magazines.

- Generate new revenue through sales of advertising placements and event sponsorships according to set company quotas
  - Prospecting
  - Conduct of sales presentations
  - Development of proposals
  - Negotiation/Closing
- Account Management
- Participation in marketing initiatives/events

REQUIREMENTS:
- Male/Female, 21 to 30 yrs old
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in Business Studies/Advertising/Management, Sales & Marketing, or equivalent
- Highly motivated, a team player, with good communication, negotiation and presentation skills, thrives under pressure and can work with minimal supervision
- Applicants must be willing to work in Makati City and do field work
- Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Corporate Sales/Advertising/Publication

SALES MANAGER

The Sales Manager will be directly responsible in monitoring and developing sales and business strategies. He/she is also responsible in managing account executives and in meeting sales team objectives.

- Develop effective advertising and events packages
- Present events concepts to key accounts
- Maintain good business relations with key accounts
- Monitor performance of Account Executives(AEs)
- Conduct coaching and facilitate training sessions with AEs
- Prospect new local and international business opportunities
- Ensure Sales Quota of the team is achieved

REQUIREMENTS:
- Graduate of Marketing, Advertising or any business course
- At least 3 years Management/Sales experience
- Articulate and possess exceptional presentation skills
- Computer literate
- Strong leadership and business sense to train and manage a sales team
- Creative in formulating sales strategies
- Aggressive in achieving sales targets
- Pleasing personality

CIRCULATION MANAGER

The Circulation Manager will be directly responsible for the distribution of magazines to outlets, retailers, distributors nationwide and ensures that delivery deadlines are strictly met within budget and quality standards.

The Circulation Manager will also facilitate and coordinate the effectivity of distribution and marketing efforts, and to help conceptualize promotions and gimmicks, to increase circulation and grow and properly position our outlets.

REQUIREMENTS:
- Graduate of Marketing, Management or any business related course
- Computer literate
- With good communication and leadership skills
- At least three (3) years experience especially in distribution/logistics industries

GRAPHIC ARTIST

The Graphic Artist will have the responsibilty of conceptualizing designs for his/her respective magazine title/department. He/she will be working closely with the Editorial Staff and Creative Director.

REQUIREMENTS:
- between 19-30 years old
- a graduate of a 4-year Communications course (or related degree), from UP, UST, Ateneo, La Salle or UA&P
- equipped with exceptional designing skills
- organized, resourceful, and creative
- able to work under minimal supervision, and individually or with a group
- willing to work overtime
- Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Magazine/Collaterals Design

EVENTS COORDINATOR

The Events Coordinator will ensure the proper and timely execution of existing events, and coordinate the various elements of our projects so that they will be successful.

REQUIREMENTS:
- Graduate of Marketing , or any business related course
- Computer literate
- With good communication and presentation skills
- With at least one (1) year experience
- Pleasing personality
- Can work with minimal supervision and thrives under pressure
- Willing to work outside normal hours and to travel
- Good Networking skills
- Exceptional organizational and logistical skills

hinge inquirer
PUBLICATIONS

Interested applicants may email their resumes to hrd@hip.ph or bring their resumé, two (2) 2x2 photos, Transcript of Records, and any valid I.D. to our office at Unit 330, Mile Long Building, Amorsolo corner Javier Streets, Makati City, from Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm ● Tel. Nos.: 759-2284, 759-2024, 840-0196, 813-6848

DUBAI DRYDOCKS حوض دبي الجاف

Website : www.drydocks.gov.ae
E-mail : drydocks@drydocks.gov.ae
Fax : 0097 1 4 3450116
Address : P.O.Box 8988, Dubai, U.A.E.
POEA Registration No. 8815560

DUBAI DRYDOCKS is a leading ship repair/conversions and new building yard with three very large graving docks, a panamax size floating dock and extensive workshop facilities. The company commenced operations in 1983 and currently employs approximately 8,500 multi-national employees from 30 countries.

Presently within the company's Production Division, vacancies exist for: -

SR. WORK PREPARATORS

As a senior member of the Steel Department team the successful candidate will be expected to have good knowledge of preparation of steel drawings using AutoCAD 2000 software. The role demands familiarity with the Classification Society rules or IACS for marine Steel construction / design and the Steel materials international standard comparison and materials alternatives. The candidates should be able to identify steel works and prepare "mark-up" drawings, proposal drawings for approval, fabrication drawings and work processes. This role also demands the ability to manage the assigned tasks independently with minimum supervision and be able to liaise with Owners Representatives and Production Staff. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 5 years experience preferably in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries / steel ship's conversions as a Steel Draughtsman or Work Preparator. Naval architect education would be advantageous. Good command of written and spoken English language is essential.

WORK PREPARATORS

As a member of the Steel Department team the role demands basic knowledge on marine Steel structures and associated Steel classification codes and standards. The successful candidate will also be expected to have good knowledge of preparation of steel drawings using AutoCAD 2000 software, a reasonable knowledge with the Classification Society rules or IACS for marine Steel construction / design and be conversant with recognized safe working standard and practices; quality work standard. The role demands identifying the scope of work from Owner's specifications, tenders, work lists and on-board and shop inspections, preparation of drawings for structural and miscellaneous steel repairs, proposal drawings for approval, fabrication drawings and work processes. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 3 years experience in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries as a Steel Draughtsman or Work Preparator. Good command of written and spoken English language is essential.

We offer an attractive employment package, including a competitive salary (currently tax-free) depending on the experience of the individual.
If you are interested in working for a Premier Shipyard please send your application with C.V / Resume to Dubai Drydocks and/ or through our Manpower Service Providers.

OMS PHILS. CORPORATION
POEA Lic. No. 557-LB-050504-R
OMS Building, 837 Maria Clara Street,
Mandaluyong City 1550.
Web : www.omsphils.ph
E-mail: info@omsphils.ph,
Tel Nos : +63 2 532 5035
Fax Nos : +63 2 532 5042

CELESTIAL INTERNATIONAL
Manpower Services, Corporation
POEA Lic. No. 206-LB-072503-R
19-E Arthur St., W.B.B.
Olongapo City
E-mail: celestial@speed.info.com.ph
Tel Nos: +63472222275
Fax Nos.: +63472233230

YSTILO SALON

YSTILO SALON CORPORATION

Immediate Hiring

STORE MANAGERS (Female)
- BS Management Graduate or any related course with or without salon experience.
- Has an excellent oral and written communication skill in English and Tagalog.
- Able to relate with customers with courtesy and can develop good rapport with co-employees.
- With pleasing personality.
- Preferably with experience in fast food chains.
- Dedicated and TEAM player & can handle pressure.
- Computer literate and willing to assist client and work on extended hours during weekends and Holidays or as needed.

RECEPTIONISTS (Female)
- College Level Graduate.
- Has a good oral and written communication skill.
- With pleasing personality.
- Able to relate with customers with courtesy.
- Computer literate

SENIOR STYLISTS (Male)
JUNIOR STYLISTS (Female)

Interested qualified applicants may send their resumé at:
75 Timog Avenue, Brgy. South Triangle, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 927.75.08 / 927.75.09 or thru e-mail:
hrd@ystilosalon.com

Shovel and Pail Builders

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGER (Male)
- BS Engineering Graduate
- With at least 3 years experience in Construction Management
- Has an excellent oral and written communication skill in English and Tagalog
- Willing to be assigned outside Metro Manila
- Dedicated and TEAM player & can handle pressure
- Should be 25 to 40 years old

Interested qualified applicants may send their resumé at:
75 Timog Avenue, Brgy. South Triangle, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 927.75.08 / 927.75.09 or thru e-mail
hrd@ystilosalon.com

DISTRIBUTOR OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY GERMAN LUBRICANTS IS IN NEED OF

SALES ENGINEERS / SALES EXECUTIVES

QUALIFICATIONS:
- Male / Female Preferably Engineering Graduate
- 21-30 yrs old / Single
- Good communication skills / Hardworking
- Has pleasing personality and motivated
- Willing to travel

Applicants may send or bring their resumé with 2x2 picture at:

ALLEN SPECIALTY PRODUCTS CO.
Unit 6-J, 20 Lansbergh Place,
170 Tomas Morato Ave., Q.C.
Email: allenspecco@pacific.net.ph
Tel. No. 374-6302 • Fax 3746303

A BIG EXPANDING FOOD COMPANY URGENTLY NEEDS

2-Accounting / Customer Service Staff

Qualifications:
- Female, 21 – 26 years old,
- Graduate of any Business course.
- Newly Graduate may apply.

1-Quality Systems Officer

Qualifications:
- Female, 25-30 years old, B.S. Food Technology, Chemistry or Chemical Engineering degree holder.
- At least 2 years working experience in Quality Systems & Documentation in Food Manufacturing & Institution

Interested applicants may send their comprehensive resumé with 2x2 ID Picture and Transcript of Records to:

P.O. Box [illegible]
Quezon City 1101

JILL Station is in need of

TEACHERS

for children ages 2-5 years old. Preferably with background in Child Education or Child Psychology and speaks good English.

Interested applicants are requested to submit their resumé with two 2½ x 2½ photos and to join training sessions at:

163 Boni Avenue, Plainview, Mandaluyong City
w/ Telephone No. (02) 531-6602

We are looking for a
POWERBUILDER PROGRAMMER
Strongly familiar with P.B., V.B., MSSQL. Photoshop, Corel. Willing to extend hours & travel.
GOOD PAY FOR DESERVING APPLICANTS
E-mail resumé to
gsgci@yahoo.com.ph

FOR HIRING:

SALES SPECIALISTS

- 24-29 YRS, FEMALE, W/ EXPERIENCE
- NBI, PNP, BRGY CLEAR. TRANSCRIPT

APPLY AT:

 # 321 DASMARIÑAS ST., ROOM 1003, DASMA CORP. CENTER BINONDO, MANILA

Get more exposure for your ad.
Advertise in JobMarket Compact

JOB Market COMPACT

Inquirer Compact available in all key cities in Luzon.

Inquire about the JobMarket package at 897-8808 loc 514.

JOB Market

BACKHOE MECHANIC - 3 yrs. exp. • Not more than 40 yrs. old
MECHANICAL ENGR. – 3 yrs. exp. • Not more than 40 yrs. old • Licensed
INVENTORY/PAYROLL/ACCOUNTING CLERKS – Not more than 30 yrs. old • Female • Comp literate • Graduate

Apply at 437-D A. Juan St. or call 7251114

Development Organization is looking for an

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Qualifications:

- Preferably Male
- Minimum age of 35
- Full-time
- Management experience with 5-year managerial/supervisory experience in Agriculture/Agri-Business/Development Management (NGO)
- Must reside or willing to relocate in Negros Island
- Must be willing to regularly travel all over Negros Island
- Knowledgeable in computer use/teleconferencing
- Must have knowledge in basic farming/agriculture
- Minimum level of education: Bachelor graduate
- Must be good in oral and written communication
- Good moral character

Expectations/Deliverables:

- Come up with master plan, action plan and targets in line with goals/ vision-mission of organization
- Overall management of organization's operations
- Periodic reports towards realization of targets

Submit CV and Letter of Intent on or before January 19, 2007 to email address: toto_12003@yahoo.com and/or oneipc@buglas.com

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING BY US-BASED COMPANY

LOAN PROCESSOR

A highly successful USA-based company is opening a Philippine office and needs personnel ASAP.

If you are a college graduate, not more than 35 years old, computer literate, have an analytical mind, are results oriented and are willing to work full time on a US time schedule then this is the job for you!

Previous experience in loan processing preferred but not required—we will train you! This position has the possibility of training and work in the USA.

Contact one of our local representatives for more information:

Jing Tan or **Leah Asmiralde** or **Jun Hernando**
Tel.: 330-1231,
Telefax: 415-3976
or email your resume to: juleen_jun@yahoo.co.uk

A leading power generation company is in need of:

PLANT CONTROLLER

A management position responsible for overall accounting, tax matters and internal controls related to power plant operations.

Qualifications:

- Certified Public Accountant
- Minimum of five (5) years experience in accounting/controllership, preferably in a power plant setting
- Proficient in Philippine, International and US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
- Prior management or supervisory experience
- Good general knowledge of Philippine tax regulations
- Proficient in MS Excel, Word and Powerpoint
- Excellent oral and written English communication skills
- Willing to accept provincial assignment

PERFORMANCE ENGINEER

Responsible for plant performance optimization, monitoring and engineering test functions of the plant. Responsible for coal and fuel oil monitoring, record and control, and periodic fuel stock physical count or surveys. Develop and formulate short-and long-range enhancement plans for plant capital improvements.

Qualifications:

- Licensed Mechanical or Electrical Engineer
- Minimum of five (5) years experience in power plant engineering, process controls, and plant performance
- Knowledge in coal-fired power plant principles of performance engineering. Familiar with ASME performance testing codes
- Familiar with ASTM procedures on coal sampling and analysis, and procedures on coal pile surveying
- Knowledge on coal-fired power plant operation, including the coal handling facilities/equipment
- Practical experience in computer software applications

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NOT LATER THAN JANUARY 26, 2007.

Please send application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
c/o Ms. Mel Abadilla
Unit 2206-2207, Orient Square Building,
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

A fast growing Ad Agency is in dire need of a brillant

copywriter

- ☑ Male/female
- ☑ Not more than 35 y.o.
- ☑ Preferably with experience in conceptualizing full ad campaigns
- ☑ Highly creative even under pressure
- ☑ Excellent presentation skills and very persuasive

Interested parties may personally bring their resumé with recent 2x2 picture to: 2F, #999-E Benitez cor. San Andres Sts., Malate Manila. Resumés may also be e-mailed to alchemyad@pldtdsl.net

SUPERFICIAL MINDS NEED NOT APPLY!

SIP Academy Philippines
is in need of

TEACHERS

(Full/Part-Time)
21 to 35 years old/loves children
PRC license not required and
Willing to be trained; must speak English well
Call 412-6775 / 915-0510
Email: sip_ph@yahoo.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions

A Group of Affiliated Microfinance Oriented Institutions operating nationwide covering areas of Southern Tagalog, Central and Eastern Visayas, Mindanao, Davao Region, ARMM, NCR and Northern Luzon.

We are in need of the following:

*Assistant Manager**

(Health and Non-Life Insurance Products and Services)

Shall be responsible to offer services to CARD Mutual Benefit Association, Inc. (CARD MBA) in expanding services of the institution as the microinsurance arm for the CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions by further developing and innovating insurance products and services on Health and Non-life. Qualified applicants must have three years of working experience on insurance particularly on Health and Non-life, preferably with Masters degree (or units) in business courses, between 27 to 40 years of age, with great interest in microfinance operations and services, good in oral and written communications in both English and Tagalog, must be willing to travel and be based in San Pablo, Laguna.

*Funds Resources Manager**

Shall be responsible for effective management of funds aiming to provide the institutions the best options to earn on high yielding investments. Qualified applicants must have two years managerial experience on funds management in any financial institution, preferably with Masters degree (or units) in business courses, between 27 to 35 years of age, with great interest in microfinance operations and services, good in oral and written communications in both English and Tagalog, must be willing to be based in San Pablo, Laguna.

*** Send your application (application letter and comprehensive resumé with recent photo) to:***

Personnel Director
HRD Office, CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions
20 M.L. Quezon St., City Subd., San Pablo City, Laguna 4000

900 Account Officers, 1 Project Officer

Shall be responsible to deliver CARD's microfinancial services particularly of the CARD Bank, CARD, Inc. Applicants must be not more than 30 years old, preferably single if female, with pleasing personality and excellent interpersonal relations skills, degree holder of any business-related course, willing to be assigned in any area of CARD operations, must have the passion in development works and must have positive attitude in dealing with people.

2 Administrative Assistants, 5 Bookkeepers
3 Internal Audit Assistants, 5 HR Officers,
1 Research Assistant

Shall be responsible in providing support services for the CARD's microfinance program. Applicants must be not more than 35 years old, preferably single if female, with pleasing personality and excellent interpersonal relations skills, degree holder preferably related course on accounting/human resources/reserach work, willing to be assigned in any area of CARD operations, must be willing to travel, must have the passion in development works and must have positive attitude in dealing with people.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS MUST ATTEND THE INTERVIEW ON ANY SCHEDULE ON THE DESIGNATED BRANCHES/ OFFICES. Please bring with you written application letter, recent 2x2 picture and proof of graduation/scholastic record. Please do not mail or send your application papers, we require these documents only on the date of the interview that applicants will be joining.

Schedule of the interview is normally conducted on Saturday. You may contact or visit us.

CARD Bank Offices	Tel. No.
M.L. Quezon St., Masbate, Masbate City	056-333-2973
Market Site, Mogpog, Marinduque	042-332-3335
Brgy. E., Aldana Real St., Las Piñas City	02-820-8050
Km. 4, Balili, La Trinidad, Benguet	074-309-3515

Main Office and Nearby Offices	Tel. No.
20 M.L. Quezon St., City Subd., 4000 San Pablo, Laguna	049-5624181
#43 Noble St., Brgy. 6, Batangas City	043-722-2910
P. Guevarra St., Sta. Cruz, Laguna	049-808-6216
Aurillo Subd., Brgy. Pag-asa, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro	043-450-0358
Carillo St., Brgy. Parang, Pagbilao, Quezon	042-731-3502
Bicol Office	
#104 Guevarra Subd., Daraga, Albay	052-483-6879
Door 2 Sandorville Townhomes Park St. Magsaysay Ave., Naga City	054-472-5803
North Luzon Office	
4th Floor, 131 Sumabat Bldg., Slaughterhouse Compound, Brgy. Sto. Niño, Baguio City	074-619-2680
Tavera St., Barangay San Antonio, Binalonan, Pangasinan	
#74 Zamora St., Dagupan City	075-522-1883
16 Alviar St., Poblacion, San Fabian	
Apartment #6 Hospital Site, Barangay Paurido Urdaneta City	
Rizal Office	
#33 Paiola St., New Saint Francis Village Brgy. San Juan, Cainta, Rizal	02-248-0426
#6 Cecilia Apartment, Ma. Ramos St., Abangan Sur, Marilao, Bulacan	044-760-0957
Natividad St., Brgy. San Pedro Morong, Rizal	02-691-5619

Cebu and Bohol Office	Tel. No.
111 A. Espuelas St., Tagbilaran City	038-501-7123
#394 F/e Grace Compound Basak, San Nicolas, Cebu City	032-261-7645
San Isidro, Juan Luna St., Danao City	0920-8026-152
Poblacion, Naga, Cebu	032-2737838
Davao Office	
Nidea St., Obrero, Davao City	082-228-6498
NCR Office	
#75 Florencia St., West 12 Ave., Grace Park, Caloocan City	02-363-2800
#51 Banahaw St., Cubao, Quezon City	02-725-2763
#37 P. Campos Avenue, San Agustin 3, Dasmariñas, Cavite	046-850-2787
#60 Sampaguita St., Brgy. 137, Pasay City	02-889-8224
#88 AF Roman St., Brgy. Balong Balo, San Juan, Metro Manila	02-725-0126
Samar and Leyte Office	
#747 Maharlika Hiway Brgy. Mercedes, Catbalogan, Samar	055-543-8002
Mabini St., Brgy. Eastern Poblacion, Hilongos, Leyte	053-336-3392
#3 Calati Corner Ibaan Alegria Village, Alegria, Ormoc City, Leyte	053-255-7744
Door 5, 007 Calitayan Road, Sagkahan, Tacloban City	053-325-5008

IMMEDIATE HIRING

BERNARDINO GENERAL HOSPITAL

IS IN NEED OF LICENSED:

- **NURSES**
- **PHARMACIST**
- **MED. TECH.**
- **RAD. TECH.**
- **MIDWIVES**

PLS. CALL..
Ms Mercy Figueroa at 935-7213
Branch # 680 Quirino Highway
San Bartolome, Novaliches, Q.C.

Ms. Tess Segura at 935-52-62 • 418-6684
Branch Zabarte Road
Brgy. Kaligayahan, Novaliches,
Quezon City

Up for a Perfectly Challenging X-perience?

I'm looking for stand out individuals who can help grow my advertising business as Account Managers.

So if you're young, attractive, aggressive, with a dynamic personality, and can sell ice to an eskimo, do email me your resume at percx.biz@gmail.com or myke.celis@gmail.com

graphic artists and copywriters are also welcome on board!

PERCX
Perfectly Creative X-tras

Multi-National Corporation
URGENTLY NEEDS

- **Experienced Telemarketers** (Trainees considered)
- **Top Pay for Top Closers**

Limited space available, so please call today for immediate interview.

Call Mr. Louie at 0928-397-2335 between 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Think what's possible

Are you looking to work in a global growth company where you can make a real difference? With more than 82,000 associates around the globe in our affiliates in more than 140 countries, we share a vision of a better today and tomorrow for patients - a vision that drives our growth and success. Our greatest job satisfaction is to know that we improve lives, extend lives and save lives - and we do it with increasing precision and efficiency through breakthrough science and innovation. We are in search for:

VETERINARY REPRESENTATIVES

(Animal Health Business Unit)

The Veterinary Representative is responsible for the achievement of territory's sales & marketing objectives in line with the Animal Health Business Unit's global & local purpose.

Qualifications:

- Graduate of Veterinary Medicine or B.S. in Agriculture major in Animal Science and other related courses
- Must be in possession of a professional drivers license
- Willing to travel to be relocated to provincial territories (Central Visayas – Cebu, Bohol, Samar, Dumaguete)
- Ideal candidates must possess excellent communication skills, must be adaptable to a dynamic & fast paced environment, customer oriented and committed to

Interested applicants may send their resumé to
Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Inc.
2/F Asian Reinsurance Bldg.
Gamboa cor. Salcedo Street
Legaspi Village, Makati City or e-mail to novartis-phil.phphma@novartis.com

NOVARTIS

Novartis is an equal opportunity employer.

www.novartis.com

Are you

FAST, ACTIVE, AND FIT?

Then join the teams of SPEED & Action Fitness Magazines

We need:

- Account Executives (Male & Female)
- Sales Assistants (Female)
- Sales Secretaries (Female)
- Graphic Artists for printing press (Male)

For immediate hiring. Apply in person and bring your résumé with photo. Qualified applicants will be interviewed immediately.

AIRO MEDIA INTERNATIONAL, INC.
96-B Panay Ave., South Triangle, QC 1103 • Tel #374-6771 to 75

ABB (www.abb.com) is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility and industry customers to improve their performance while lowering environmental impact. The ABB Group of companies operates in around 100 countries and employs about 107,000 people.

ABB offers very attractive compensation and benefits package to qualified applicants, including training and factory visits in other ABB companies in Asia Pacific, US and in Europe.

AUTOMATION PRODUCTS DIVISION

Low Voltage Department

One (1) Sr. Sales Engineer
(Based in Head Office)

Qualifications:
- Licensed Electrical Engineer
- At least 5 years experience in Marketing and Sales in Electrical Industry – Commercial and Industrial Projects, Panel-builder, Electrical Network, OEMs
- Knowledgeable in LV Breakers and its applications
- Proficient in oral & written communication
- Computer literate
- Licensed to drive

Responsibilities:
- Marketing and Sales of Low Voltage breakers
- Develop new accounts for Low Voltage breakers

Drives & Machines Department

One (1) Sales Engineer
(Based in Cagayan de Oro or Davao Branch)

Qualifications:
- Licensed Electrical and Communications Engineer or Electrical Engineer
- Must be a local resident from Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon, Iligan and can speak local dialect
- At least 3 to 5 years experience in selling drives, motors, instruments, automation and other related equipment
- Must come from metal, cement, pulp & paper, sugar, mining or from other process/manufacturing industries that use drives, motors, automation, etc.

Responsibilities:
- Marketing and Sales of drives, motors, instruments, automation and other related equipment
- To cover all Mindanao area, including Davao, Zamboanga, Bukidnon, Cotobato, Cagayan de Oro, Surigao, Palawan etc.

TURBOCHARGER DIVISION

Service/Workshop Department

Three (3) Service Engineer
(2 - Based in Head office, with project site assignment, 1 – Based in Cebu branch)

Qualifications:
- Licensed Mechanical or Marine Engineer
- At least 3 to 5 years experience in servicing high speed rotating equipment, in marine, shipyard or diesel power plant
- Knowledgeable in ABB Turbocharger products and its applications
- Proficient in oral & written communication
- Computer literate
- Licensed to drive

Responsibilities:
- Primarily responsible for carrying out Turbocharger service & repair at site and at the workshop
- Repair and overhauling, troubleshooting, failure analysis, warranty investigation and reporting
- High level customer orientation and concern for meeting quality standards and timely service deliveries are essential attributes of this role.

FINANCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

One (1) Sr. Financial Analyst
(Based in Head Office)

Qualifications
- BS Accountancy preferably CPA
- At least 3 years experience in Finance and Accounting
- Knowledgeable in SAP Financial Accounting Module
- Knowledgeable in the current international accounting standards
- Proficient in Advanced MS Excel
- Self motivated, able to work independently as well as within a team environment
- Good interpersonal skills, able to communicate and interact with all levels of employees (staff internally) locally and globally.
- Possesses high ethical standards
- Has the ability to analyze complex situations and create solutions
- Possesses high degree of sense of responsibility and must be results oriented

Responsibilities:
- Accounts Receivables
- ABACUS reporting
- Sales order/project analysis

PROJECT MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Three (3) Sr. Project Engineer
(Based in Head office, with project site assignment)

Qualifications:
- Licensed Electrical Engineer
- At least 5 years experience in Substation or Transmission projects up to 230kv
- With experience in Construction, Site Supervision and Fieldwork
- Proficient in oral & written communication
- Computer literate
- Licensed to drive

Responsibilities:
- Project management of large power system projects e.g. Turnkey Substation Projects
- Responsible for the implementation and execution of the project, on time delivery, quality, cost analysis and claim management
- Direct coordination with suppliers and customers on technical and general matters related to on-going projects
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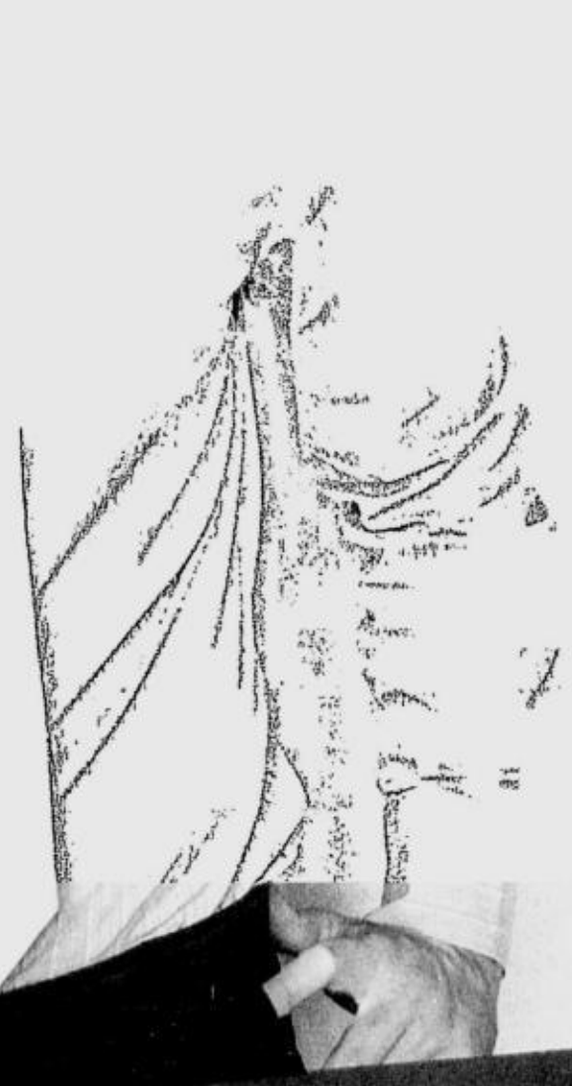

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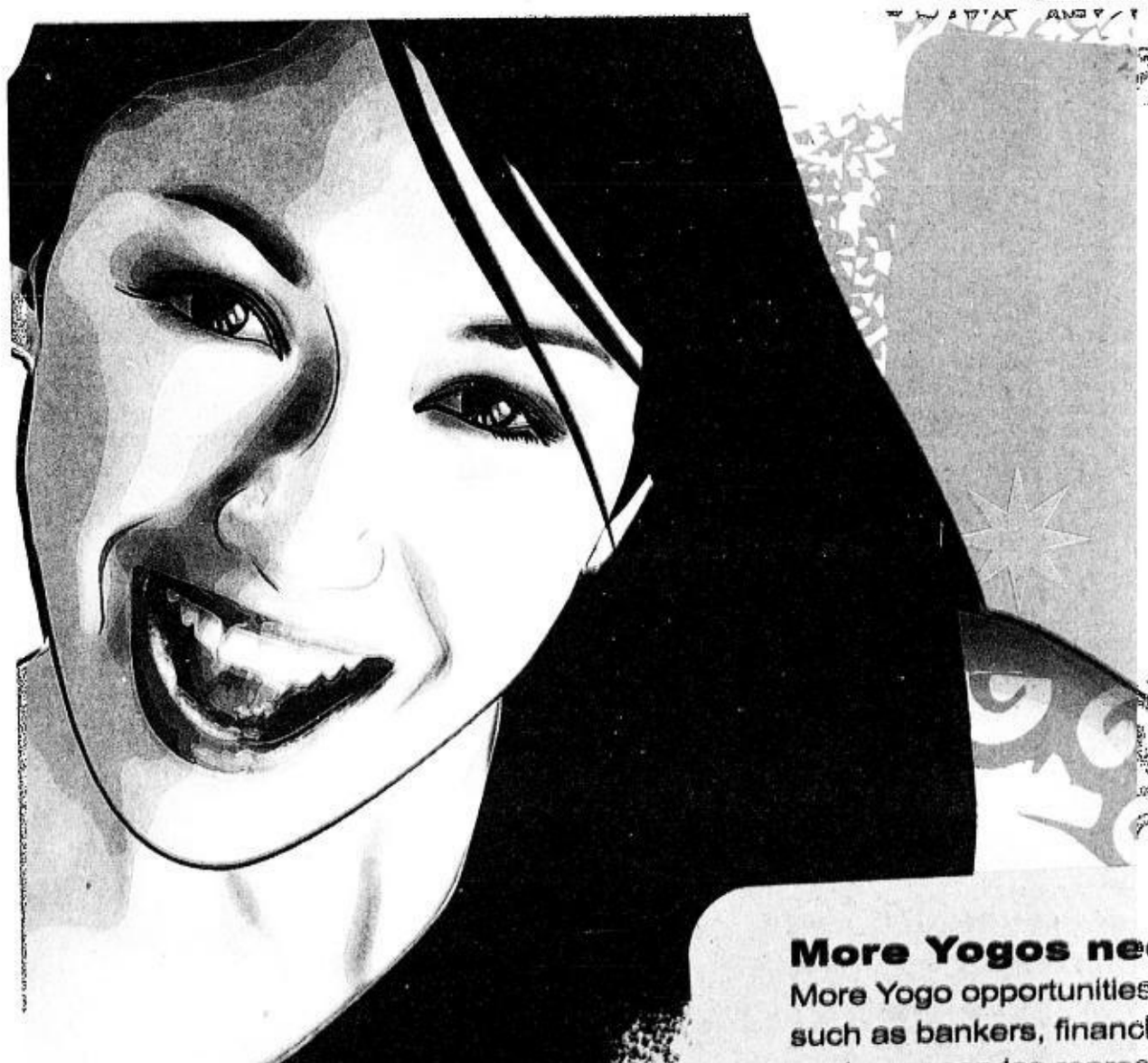

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Planning your sabbatical

Prolonged leave allows one to pursue a more holistic development

By Ma. Esther Salcedo-Posadas
Contributor

AT LEAST ONCE IN YOUR PROFESsional life, you may wish to consider taking a sabbatical from work. Simply stated, a sabbatical is a prolonged leave that usually lasts for about a year or so. The leave is intended to allow the person to pursue other interests or avocations, such as study or cultural exchange.

This allows a person to pursue a more holistic personal development. It also provides much-need rest from the regular course of one's professional life.

A lot of people will probably wonder how they can possibly get a one-year leave from work without losing their tenure and status in the company. Good planning is essential. Most things are negotiable if you have managed a good performance at work, as well as maintained a good relationship with your boss. Likewise, you can also highlight the professional benefits that your sabbatical may bring. Of course, choosing to go on sabbatical may mean that you are also ready to forego income for that year. This is one reason why you have to be well-prepared when you go on sabbatical. Anything can happen within a one-year period and you have to be ready, both financially and emotionally. It takes maturity to choose and plan for a sabbatical.

While it may be true that some people could lose their jobs if they go on extended leave, it really boils down to your core beliefs and career plans.

Some people get so attached to their work that they can't even leave it for a day. What really should you be doing with your life? How can you develop as a person? Some people plan their sabbatical while they are in between jobs, so as to prevent any disruptions once they start a new job. For others, they take a sabbatical towards retirement. It is really up to you.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Going on a sabbatical entails going out of your comfort zone to explore other possibilities that life has to offer. This is different from the purposeless gait of certain unemployed individuals who don't know what to do with their lives. A sabbatical is filled with purpose for one's personal and professional development. Some people choose to pursue further studies, either by getting a degree or simply attending an extension course of their interest. Others also decide to go abroad or perhaps go to any other location other than the current place of residence. Experiencing other cultures often provides new insights and learning points.

For married people, planning your sabbatical entails discussion with your spouse. If you are taking care of very young children, it may not be possible for you to be absent for a prolonged period of time. If that's the case, you may have to postpone plans and instead focus on what you can do to enrich your life without necessarily taking a long leave.

Your work is but one of the aspects of personal development. A person is a whole being and therefore would have spiritual, family and other needs. It is important to always see the big picture in planning your life.

(The author is editor of Baby Magazine and has worked as an executive search consultant.)

Keeping the hope (even if you have no job)

By Loree Cruz-Mante and Marivic R. Gustilo
Contributors

WHY DO WE WELCOME NEW YEAR with a bang and not a whimper? Why do we make merry instead of grieve? Or why do we try to rejoice even when we may not have too many reasons to do so?

The answer is simple: Hope.

Those who find themselves without a job as the new year comes are probably in a more challenged position than those who simply move on with their careers. This is because they must look for a job in the incoming year. They must join the ranks of jobseekers like themselves, whether retrenched, fired, resigned, just graduated from school, returning entrants to the workforce or retirees seeking new careers. Those who have to look for jobs in the new year must compete in a highly competitive marketplace and hold their own against countless others claiming their stake in the world of work just like themselves.

Optimism

A key component of hope is optimism, the ability to view things in a positive light and to see the good in all things. Optimism makes it possible to bounce back after being derailed by setbacks and obstacles. To the optimists, problems are not considered hindrances but opportunities for learning and growing. In that sense, obstacles are welcomed rather than avoided.

In his book "Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life," Martin Seligman notes three components which differentiate optimists from pessimists in the way they understand adversity and failure.

Permanence

Optimists see adversity as impermanent, temporary, fleeting. Pessimists, however, see failure as a forever thing. Pessimists will say: "I will never find a job" while optimists will say, "I didn't get this job. I have four more leads to pursue."

Pervasiveness

This component describes the extent to which people allow failure to affect them. "All companies are looking for younger people" is a sweeping pessimistic view of the entire employment scenario. On the other hand, optimists will say: "This particular company wants younger people but there are others who want more mature and experienced workers like me." This statement rightly limits the specific failure to its proper scope and reach.

Personalization

Pessimists consider failure to be negative and internal. They believe that there is something wrong with them as persons, making them unacceptable to employers. "I am not marketable," pessimists will say. Optimists, on the other hand, view failure as positive and welcome. "I have competencies other companies need which this particular company which has rejected me does not."

Optimism in the job search

Optimistic jobseekers stand a better chance of viewing the job-hunting process as life-giving and worthwhile. They can take rejec-tions at face value, never allowing failure to diminish their innate goodness, capabilities and worth as persons and workers. They allow themselves to feel upset and to mourn their loss, then use their setback to be the launch pad from which they leap forward and take control of their future. They keep things in perspective and confine the effects of adversity to their appropriate space and time.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Jobseekers who nurture their optimism and use it to propel them through the difficult and trying challenges of looking for a new job in the new year will survive and thrive. They will grow with every experience and be grateful for what they learn from each one.

And because they have the ability to convert the most dismal to the brightest of experiences, they will also be those workers that companies would love to have among their ranks. It may be a matter of time before they are "discovered" but it will come.

Starting with hope

The New Year is probably the best time of year to start anew. A new optimism, a new hope and a new year go well together. And so does the tug at the heartstring that tells us that even in times when all is well, it is best for us to fail and to rise again and again and again because it is there where real success has its definition and meaning.

(Loree Cruz-Mante is a freelance HR and OD practitioner, published writer, editor, trainor, and career/life counselor.)

How do I motivate my team?

By Tita Datu Puangco

I HAVE JUST been appointed as a team leader in the manufacturing facility where I work. I have no previous training as a leader. Can you advise me how I can connect with my team who are former peers and colleagues? Should I continue to be friendly to them? Or should I keep some distance? I know my role has changed. A person in my team thinks she deserves to get the position that I now have. What should I do? I don't want to fail in my new job.

New Supervisor

You have just entered into the challenging and exciting world of managing people. I agree your role has changed. Before you were engaged almost completely with technical work or "doing work." When you become team leader you start to achieve results not only through your own efforts but also through people. While a portion of your time is still engaged in technical work, 30 percent of your time will now focus on planning, leading, organizing and controlling work of your team.

I suggest you continue to be friendly with your team, but no longer in the same way as before. You may have to be more formal, still friendly, but not familiar. They may notice a change in the way you behave. You simply explain to them that the additional responsibility requires you to focus on the leading task and seek their cooperation. Your friendship shall now be transformed to not just building relationships but achieving the tasks of the team as well.

As to the person aspiring for your position, I suggest you apply positive assertiveness. Talk to the person with empathy and win the person to your side. She is likely to be equally competent. Seek her help in achieving the goals of the team. Recognize her capabilities. Give her importance.

You want to connect to your people. Recently I read a very interesting book entitled, "Leadership Presence" by Belle Linda Halpern and Kathy Lubar. They suggest a number of techniques that work. These are "being present," "reaching out," "expressiveness" and "self-knowing." They are techniques that actors use to demonstrate presence on stage. Based on their experience these techniques have worked to benefit leaders in organizations as well.

Being present is defined as "the ability to be completely present in the moment and flexible enough to handle the unexpected." In my experience, this is an excellent technique that allows a team leader to focus attention in the present and achieve results. It screens out all distractions. At the same time there is the openness to the unexpected. Team leaders if they stick to what they have originally planned even if the situation changes will lack the flexibility to flow and address the unexpected.

Reaching out is the ability to build relationships with others through empathy, listening and authentic connection. The leader has to be sincere and come across as genuinely interested in the good of every person in the team. Empathy and listening allows him to get the best that the team can offer.

What are the keys to empathy? These are: knowing what makes your people tick, making the link to your own feelings and the toughest key is to practice learning how to empathize with everyone.

Expressiveness is the ability to express feelings and emotions appropriately by using all means of expression: words, voice, body and face to deliver a consistent message. Leaders use emotion, backed by reason to set the tone for the organization. What is important is to send clear and compelling messages to achieve clear results.

Finally, know yourself. It is the ability to accept yourself and to reflect on your values, decisions and actions. This means reflecting on your life and finding anecdotes, incidents and stories and use them to make values explicit to your people. It also means allowing the true person to emerge by learning how to build trust and credibility. Wishing you only the best. God Bless!

(The author is CEO of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, a training and consulting company.)

Henry's secret weapon

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

WE CAN LEARN ABOUT READINESS FROM TODAY'S GOSpel where Jesus accommodates His mother's request despite His initial objection as His "hour has not yet come."

Certain circumstances at work sometimes push us to the edge and compel us to jump blindfolded into the sea, so to speak, when we feel we are hardly ready for it. This is what happened to Henry who was quite satisfied being deputy purchasing officer in a multinational firm. His boss, Mr. Quismundo, suddenly suffered a bad stroke and had to quit work. Management offered the position to Henry but he honestly felt he was hardly prepared for the responsibility. Besides, he was adequately paid for doing work that he really enjoyed; he didn't see the sense in taking on a greater burden when he was already contented with what was in his hands. In trying to beg off, Henry even suggested that the position be offered to another manager he thought more equipped for the job, but management wouldn't even entertain the idea. So, in short, Henry was prevailed upon to step into Mr. Quismundo's shoes.

He felt very awkward in the beginning, sure he would fail. But soon enough, management and his coworkers were to smile with admiration over the way he was running things. Little did he realize that all it would take to handle the unexpected is to remain constant in one's work style—and Henry's was founded on sound principles. Henry approaches his work conscientiously, and he keeps his hands clean. This was to be proven over time when temptations came and Henry shunned them all. He did not talk about it then but at his retirement party, his children "inherited" that solid lesson from him: "I just did as He told me. There was no decision I made, big or small, that I did not first consult Him on. That was what gave me confidence that whatever work would be given to me, I could do no wrong. Just do as He tells you." *(E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)*

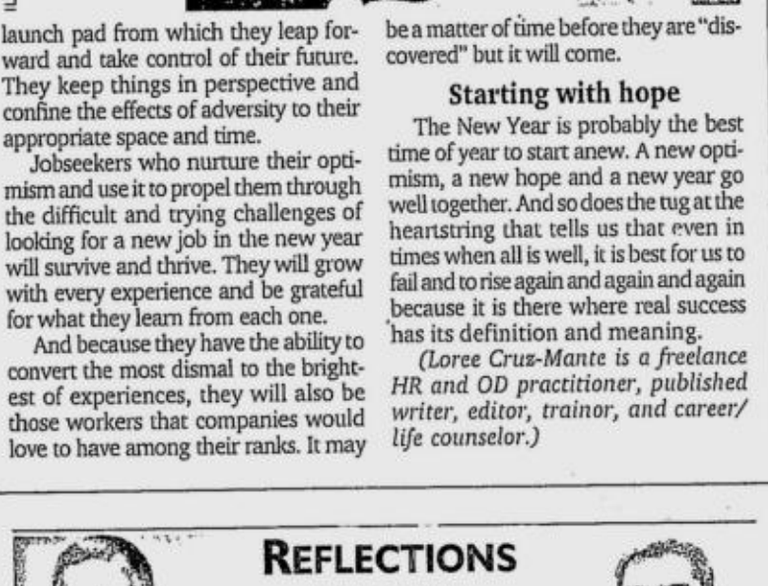

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

Gospel John 2: 1-11
His mother said to the servers, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL

Service industry

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

THE SERVERS IN TODAY'S GOSPEL VERSE FOCUS REMIND me of the growing service industry and the correspondingly increasing number of workers whose livelihood is in rendering service to people as domestics, caregivers, entertainers, tour operators, teachers and a host of other occupations.

Most of these workers seem to be less valued in terms of both material compensation and benefits, and esteem and appreciation, by society in general than those high-paying operators and workers in the high-tech manufacturing industry. It may be understandable that the latter is valued highly because they help the company earn more money and profit than the former. But then, it would seem that "serving" machines is considered more valuable than serving people; money and machines would appear to be held as more precious than persons and loving human relationships. It is consoling, however, to note that both Mary and Jesus showed importance to these kinds of workers by making them somehow, instruments for the first miracle of Jesus! The servers were the ones who first witnessed the miracle of water turned into wine, in a way being gifted with some kind of a privilege by the Lord.

I think that those in the service industry who directly serve people, share their time, their talents/skills or even part of themselves with others and perhaps, also those whose jobs may be directly dealing with machines but who would show high regard for people, will be blessed by the Lord with some special rewards for their greater care and concern for people than for material things. After all, God showed how much He loves man, by becoming one like us. *(E-mail the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)*

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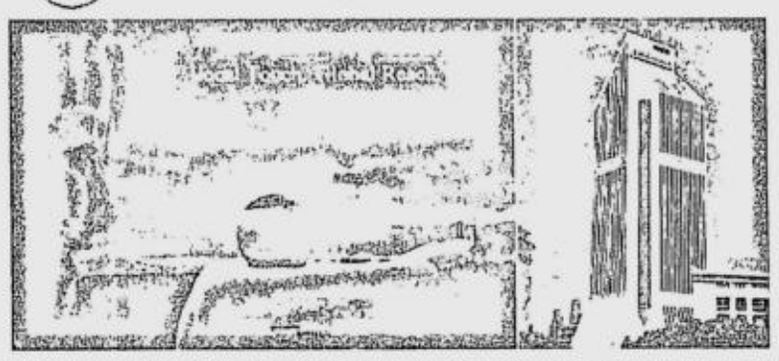

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Interested applicant may send their RESUMÉ with contract no. and 2 x 2 photo to **NASA WATER CORPORATION**
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or may email to: nasa_vendo@yahoo.com.ph

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- male, college grad, 25-28 yrs old
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- w/ drivers license

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- at least 1 year exp. In Sales, Mktg. Management
- has worked in a marketing, Ad Agency or Media Company
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RP, Canada set joint efforts to ensure quality jobs for OFWs

SOME 5,000 OVERseas Filipino workers are expected to be deployed to Canada this 2007 as the country becomes an emerging, alternative destination for highly skilled OFWs in the oil and gas industry, and other areas, due to the labor market demand propelled by the development of the oil rich central and western Canadian provinces, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) today disclosed.

The development comes as the Philippines and Canada forged recently a Memorandum of Understanding boosting the two countries' linkages and "Cooperation in the Fields of Labor, Employment, and Human Resource Development."

The milestone accord, which affirms the preference for OFWs in the Canadian labor market, was forged by Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion, and Minister of Advanced Education and Employment of the Province of Saskatchewan of Canada Pat Atkinson, during the Secretary's recent mission to Canada. Ahead of the Brion mission to Canada, Minister Atkinson had also visited the Philippines earlier in 2006.

Brion said that the hallmark and milestone agreement, the first in many years between Canada and the Philippines, is working to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries, through common solutions to labor and human resource challenges, pursuant to their respective laws and regulations.

The Labor Chief noted that Canada, the world's 2nd largest country in area, accounts for an increasing volume of remittances from major OFW host economies. He cited Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas figures indicating that total OFW remittances from Canada surpassed US$117.061 million in 2005, representing a growth of 73.8 percent from $67.338 million in 2004.

Labor Attache to Toronto, Canada, Attorney Francisco Luna, noted that the MOU forged between the Philippines' Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Her Majesty the Queen in the Right of the Province of Saskatchewan, as represented by the Minister Responsible for Immigration and the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment, has opened up new opportunities in emerging labor markets within Canada.

Saskatchewan is one of the provinces comprising the vast central and western area of Canada, which includes Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, and other territories.

Luna noted that in earlier years since the migration of Filipinos to Canada begun in the 20th century, OFWs had tended to concentrate on the eastern area of Canada.

"Canada's slow birth rate, and graying population, are factors propelling the need for overseas Filipino workers, who would also be filling up labor market requirements this time in central and western Canada amidst the development of the oil and gas industry in the area."

This means, Luna said, that OFWs who have ventured before as undocumented truck drivers in the Middle East, as well as highly experienced Filipino oil and gas workers in the desert, will have recourse to new prospects in terms of better paying, safer, quality job opportunities in Canada.

Some 5,000 OFWs are expected to be deployed to Canada this year, Luna said. Overall, the opportunities in Canada are not limited to oil and gas, as he noted the wide demand for OFWs in a broad range of services, including higher paying McDonald's type or fastfood type jobs.

"Normally, these job types pay 6 to 7 dollars per hour, but here, they pay as high as 12 to 15 dollars."

The Brion-Atkinson accord will work to ensure the conditions, welfare and protection, and stronger linkages between Canadian and Philippine training schools, Luna said. Its provisions will shield against the menace posed by illegal recruiters, and will also boost the new reintegration policy set in motion by Brion to ensure social, economic as well as brain gain advantages for the Philippines from the global deployment of OFWs.

CONFERENCE OF LABOR ATTACHES.
Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion (3rd from left) answers queries from the media during the press briefing at the closing of the three-day command conference of labor attaches held at the Heritage Hotel in Pasay City recently. The conference was held to identify and develop high-end overseas labor markets and improve the services for OFWs onsite abroad. Shown from left are: Undersecretary Danilo P. Cruz, Tesda Director General Augusto Syjuco, and Undersecretaries Arturo Sodusta and Romeo Lagman.

1.083 million OFWs globally deployed

A TOTAL OF 1,083,568 DOCUMENTED overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have been deployed in more than 190 OFW host destinations globally in the year 2006, Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion today disclosed.

The Labor Chief said that the deployment figure represents a total global growth rate of 9.6 percent (+94,953), compared to the 988,615 OFWs globally deployed in 2005.

He said that the global deployment figures of the OFWs are clearly positive on all areas.

Brion was apprised by the DOLE's Philippine Overseas Employment Administration that the deployment of land-based OFWs registered the highest year round growth reaching 11.2 percent (+82,852) from 740,632 in the same period last year, to 823,484 from January 1 to December 31 this year.

In the land-based sector, the deployment of new-hire OFWs grew by 7.2 percent from 289,981 to 310,734, while those in the rehired category increased by 13.8 percent from 450,651 to 512,750.

Brion said that the global deployment of overseas Filipino seafarers rose from 247,983 in the same period last year, to 260,084 from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2006, for a total global growth rate reaching 4.9 percent (+12,101).

Finally, he said that pending the final assessment of the Central Bank, total OFW remittances in 2006 are expected to approach, if not surpass, the US$13 billion level for the first time based on the global preference for the OFWs in more than 190 economies.

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- ☐ Graduate of a 4-year business course
- ☐ Excellent communication skills- Proficiency in English is a must
- ☐ Proficient in typing and computer skills
- ☐ Assertive with strong customer service orientation
- ☐ High level of maturity in dealing with pressure
- ☐ At least 2 years experience in accounting or finance/(HR field) preferred
- ☐ Willing to undergo extensive training
- ☐ (for IT specialist) knowledgeable in network Administration in a Windows NT environment (Cisco certified specialist an advantage)

Qualified candidates should send-in a comprehensive resume, transcript of school records and latest 2 x 2 picture to the following email addresses:

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UP GRADE 2007 the 18th university job fair

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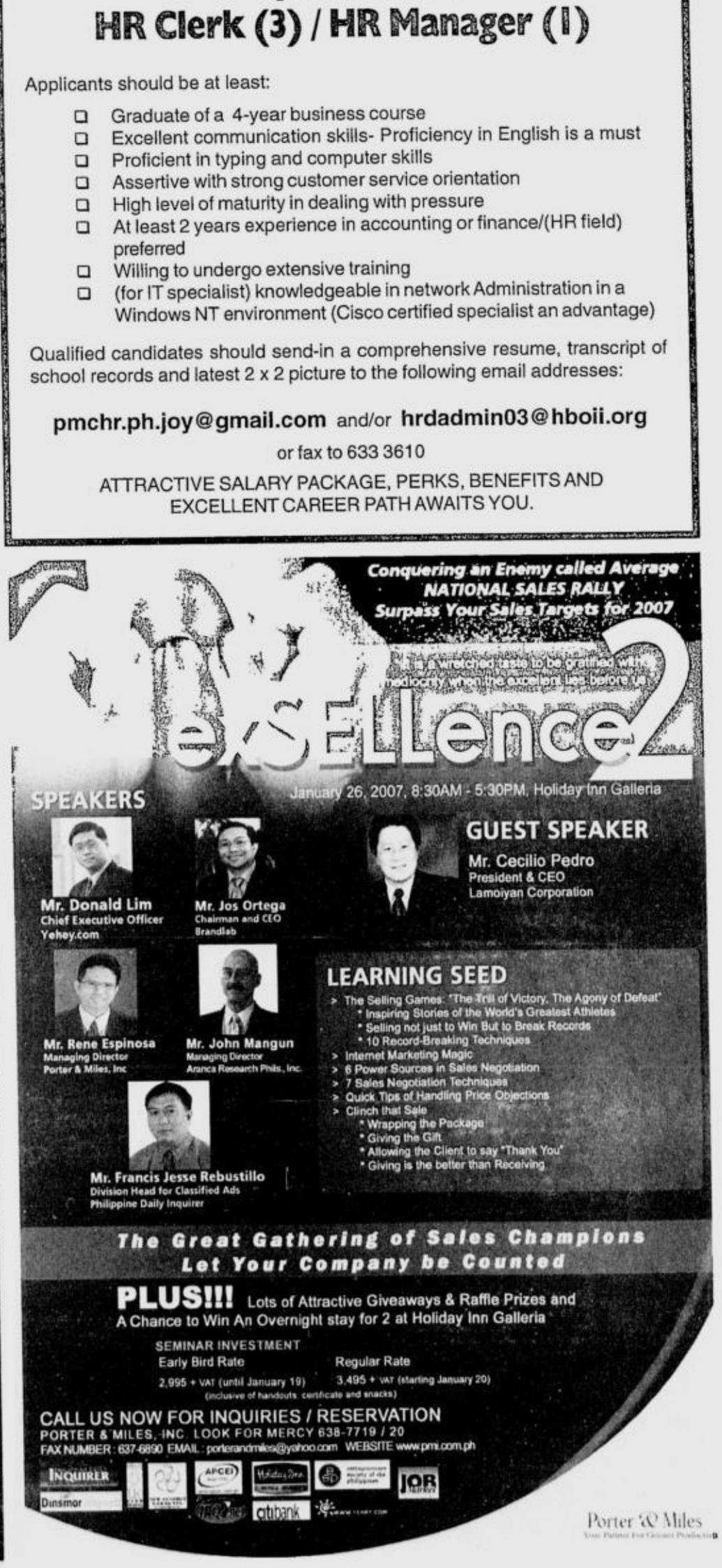
The organizers will gladly welcome any inquiries regarding this event through the following: Tel. No./Fax No.: 929.5835 or e-mail and send your resumes to upjobfair2007@gmail.com. You may also contact us through any of the following: 0927-3303691 (Beth), 0918-6160885 (DK), 0916-4460329 (Theresa), 0927-6064730 (Maila), 0917-6100684 (Kristy).



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Please send your resume, transcript of records and passport size photo to:
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Building rural capacities for sustainability

The Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that draws on more than 50 years of experience in rural development. PRRM aims to enhance the capacities of rural communities in the planning, advocacy and implementation of sustainable development, through an integrated program of education, livelihood, health, habitat, environment and self-governance.

PRRM is currently looking for competent individuals for the following positions:

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Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Development Education Specialist
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Please send your application letter and resumé to:

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Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
PRRM Building, 56 Mother Ignacia Ave cor.
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College graduate; Friendly, presentable and charming; Exceptional communication skills; Good listening skills; Problem-solver; Experience in customer service/HRM an advantage; Willing to go on field

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1101 Ermita Center Building
1350 Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila
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Creative Designer
Primarily responsible for project design and conceptualization. Must possess a degree in Interior Design, Architecture, or Industrial Design with Interior Design experience; exceptionally creative and innovative; with solid knowledge of AutoCAD; knowledge of Adobe Photoshop an advantage; experience in booth design and visual merchandising an advantage; can work long hours, thrives under pressure; must be patient, flexible, mature, hardworking, a team player; female, not more than 30 years old.

Technical Staff
Primarily responsible for the preparation of the project working drawings. Must have a degree in Architecture, Interior Design, or Industrial Design. Proficient in AutoCAD; preferably with at least one (1) year related experience in the preparation of working drawings; familiar and updated in materials and applications; organized, systematic, flexible, a team player; male or female, not more than 30 years old.

Marketing Assistant
Primarily responsible for providing assistance to the Marketing Department. A graduate of a four-year college course preferably design courses, Marketing, or Mass Communications. Preferably with minimum one (1) year related experience; excellent organizational and time management skills; attention to details and a tolerance for working on multiple projects simultaneously; upbeat, positive, outgoing, personable and able to relate well with others; excellent verbal and written skills; ability to focus and follow-through independently; ability to take initiative, multi-task and work well under pressure; proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office programs, especially MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint; male or female, not more than 30 years old.

Production Assistant
Primarily responsible for assisting the Production Officer/Production Head in the implementation/production of the designs, their installation and dismantling. Must possess a degree in Civil Engineering, Architecture or Industrial Design. Must have at least one (1) year experience in production-related jobs and exhibition booth designs gained from an exhibition industry and/or an interior design/ architectural firm. Male or female, not more than 35 years old.

Research and Development Officer
Responsible for the research and development requirements of the company. Graduate of a degree in Engineering, Architecture, Interior Design, Fine Arts or related field in design, preferably with a minimum of three (3) years work experience. Good in physics, i.e., knowledge of strength of materials; with updated knowledge on design trends and available materials in the market. Must be resourceful, young, dynamic, keen on details, patient, persevering, result-oriented, able to meet deadlines, persuasive, strong-willed, open to ideas, with good presentation skills, mature, smart, personable, has good command of the English language, team player and can work well under pressure. Male or female, not more than 35 years and below.

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UPecon Foundation, Inc.

The **Health Policy Development Program** is a new USAID-funded, five-year initiative to assist the Department of Health (DOH) in its institutional role of shaping the policy environment towards achieving better health outcomes, a more responsive health system and equitable health care financing. The UPecon Foundation, Inc., the corporate arm of the University of the Philippines School of Economics, manages this Program.

The **UPecon** is looking for **TWO (2) TEAM LEADERS** to supervise policy development activities in the following program components: contraceptive self-reliance – family planning/maternal and child health (CSR-FP/MCH), and health care financing.

The team leaders shall perform oversight project management and monitoring functions for all projects under his/her respective program component. He/she shall be responsible for ensuring that all projects under his/her component are technically sound, coherent with the overall technical framework, and; achieve set targets and other deliverables. Likewise, he/she shall interact closely with the different Offices of the DOH, attached agencies and other Government Offices.

Applicants must have the following qualifications:

Position	Advanced Degree in	Years of Experience
Team Leader for CSR-FP/MCH	Public health and/or related health disciplines	At least 5 years experience in FP/MCH program implementation. Experience in LGU logistics management and procurement of FP commodities is an advantage.
Team Leader for Health Care Financing	Economics, public administration and/or related disciplines	At least 5 years experience in public health investments, public expenditure, health insurance

Compensation for the above positions is competitive.

Application letters expressing interest in the position together with curriculum vitaé should be sent to: The Chief of Party, Health Policy Development Program, UPecon Foundation, Inc., Room 322, PCED Building, UP School of Economics, UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City or email to: **upecon.hpdp@gmail.com** or facsimile to: 436-3677 on or before January 26, 2007 (Friday). For any inquiry please contact the Business Management Unit (BMU) at the following telephone numbers: 436-3677; 927-9686 locals 321 and 322 or email to **upecon.hpdp@gmail.com**

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MATERIALS ENGINEER
Male, registered CE, must be DPWH accredited, at least 23 years old, min 1 year related work experience in construction, knowledgeable on materials testings, quality control & estimate works. Computer literate.

DREDGE MASTER
30-50 years old, at least college level, licensed marine deck officer, with experience in coastline or high sea vessel, with exposure in dredging/reclamation works, can operate suction dredger with hydraulic system

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Male, 25-40 years old, at least high school graduate. Must have experience in automotive and/or heavy equipments.

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Media and Publishing specialist

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Agriculture Teacher
Environment specialist

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Social work adviser
NGO development worker

HEALTH
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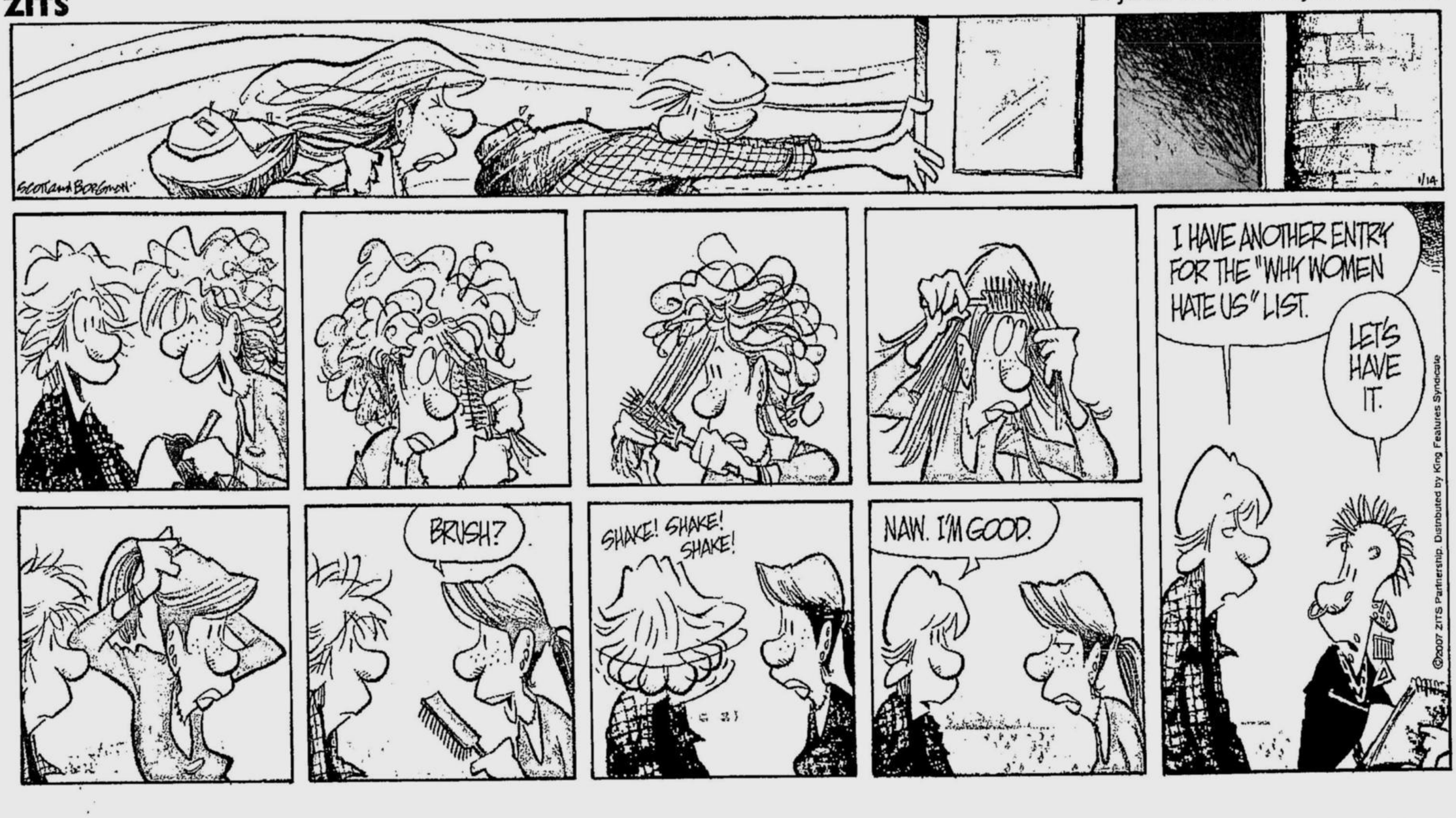

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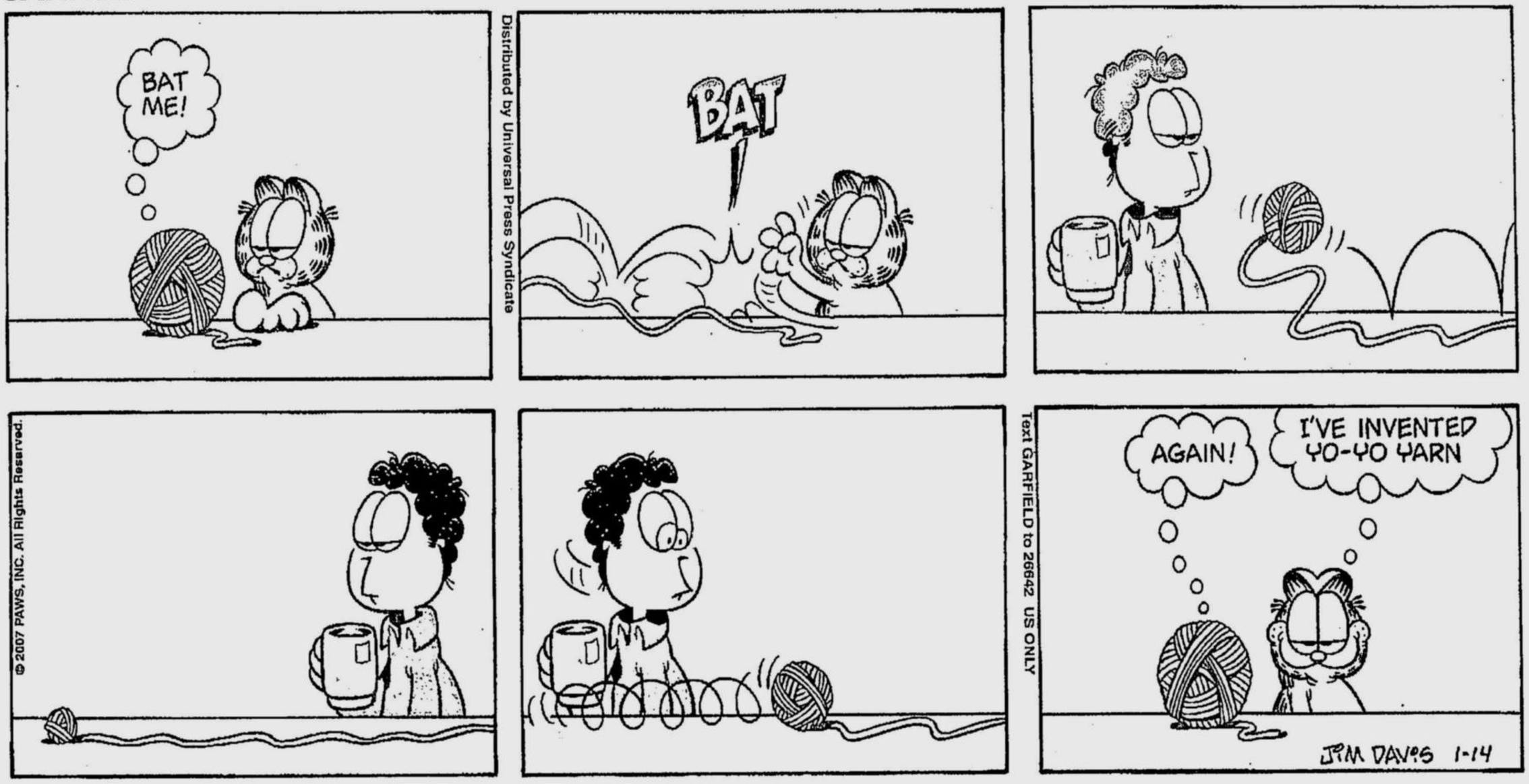

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FULL HOUSE

BY STEPH BRAVO

*sunday*INQUI

January 14, 2007

FREE

Beauty, According to Vicki Belo

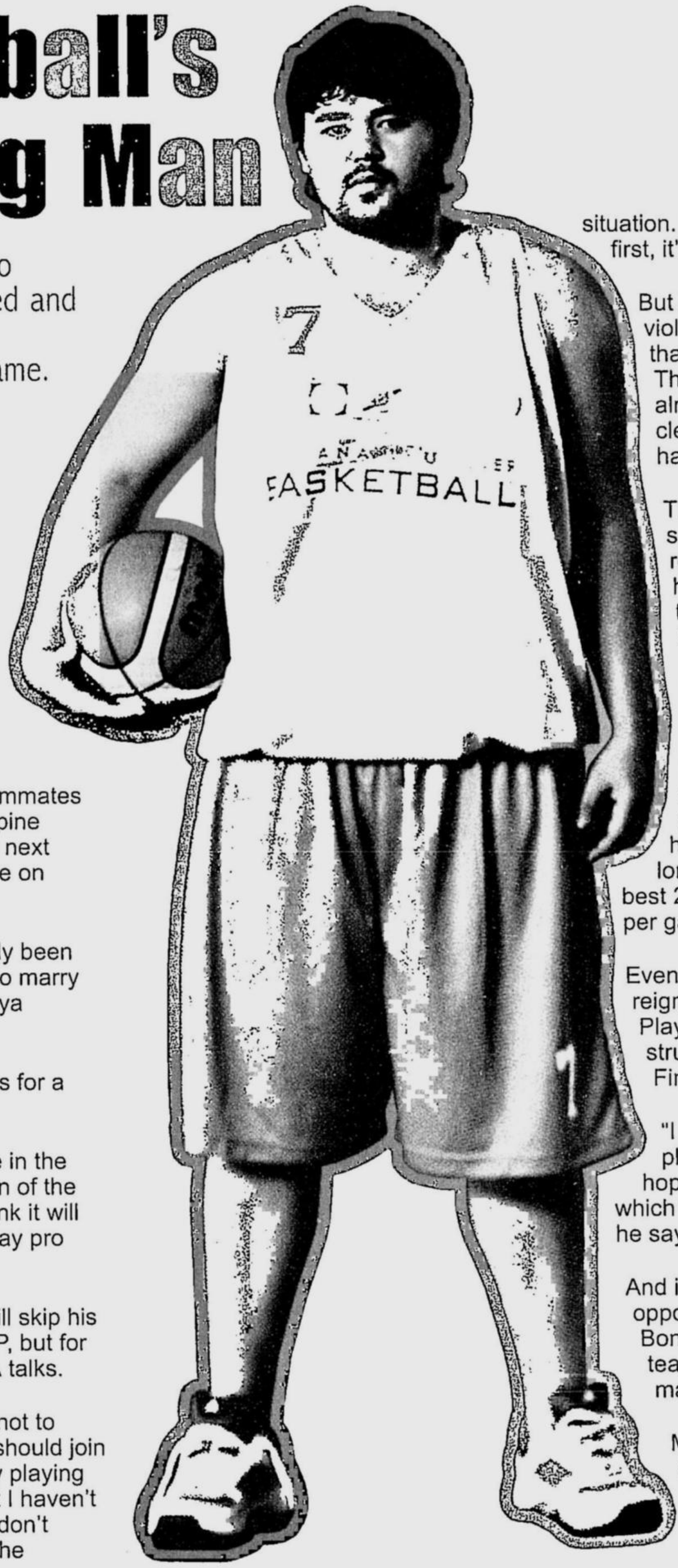
The country's most well-known cosmetic surgeon and guru of pulchritude talks about beauty—wanting it, glorifying it, and making it available to anyone who wants it

PLUS: Marnie Arcilla, Filipino actress in New York • Ken Bono, hardcourt giant • Eduardo Sicangco, stage design genius, and more

By Jasmine W. Payo
Photographs by Rudy Esperas

Basketball's Next Big Man

UAAP standout Ken Bono proves that there's speed and sweetness beneath that awesome 250-pound frame. Just ask his fiancée



WHILE most of his senior teammates dream of playing in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) next season, Ken Bono has his eye on building a family.

Only 22, Bono has surprisingly been busy with an off-court plan—to marry his model-pretty girlfriend Maya Montecillo by July this year.

"We've been preparing for this for a long time," says Bono.

After a breakout performance in the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP), many think it will be a waste if Bono doesn't play pro ball this year.

Predictions are rife that he will skip his final playing year in the UAAP, but for now, Bono dismisses all PBA talks.

"Many people are telling me not to waste the opportunity, that I should join the draft because I'm already playing very well," shares Bono. "But I haven't really decided on the PBA. I don't know yet, I'm still looking at the situation. Our wedding will come first, it's our priority right now."

But before we cue in the violins, Bono makes it clear that he's far from distracted. That message, in fact, already came through quite clearly on the UAAP hardcourt.

Throughout the season, it seemed like Bono worked really hard to make up for his underachieving past with the Adamson Soaring Falcons.

The massive 6-foot-5 center unexpectedly doubled his output this UAAP season. After averaging 11.7 markers and 6.6 rebounds in 2005, his numbers leaped—nay, long-jumped—to a league-best 22.4 points and 10.6 boards per game.

Even more noteworthy, the reigning UAAP Most Valuable Player powered the perennially struggling Falcons to their first Final Four appearance.

"I didn't expect that I'll be playing this well. I was just hoping to achieve our goal, which was to enter the Final Four," he says.

And it looked like none of his opponents expected it, too. Bono got double- and triple-teamed all season, but it didn't matter.

Maximizing his 250-pound bulk, Bono proved to be one

(continued on page 4)

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Basketball's Next Big Man (from page 2)

of the finest low-post scorers in the collegiate league. And as quickly as he sweeps a rebound, Bono not only earned raves for his pro-ready skills, but silenced his weight critics as well.

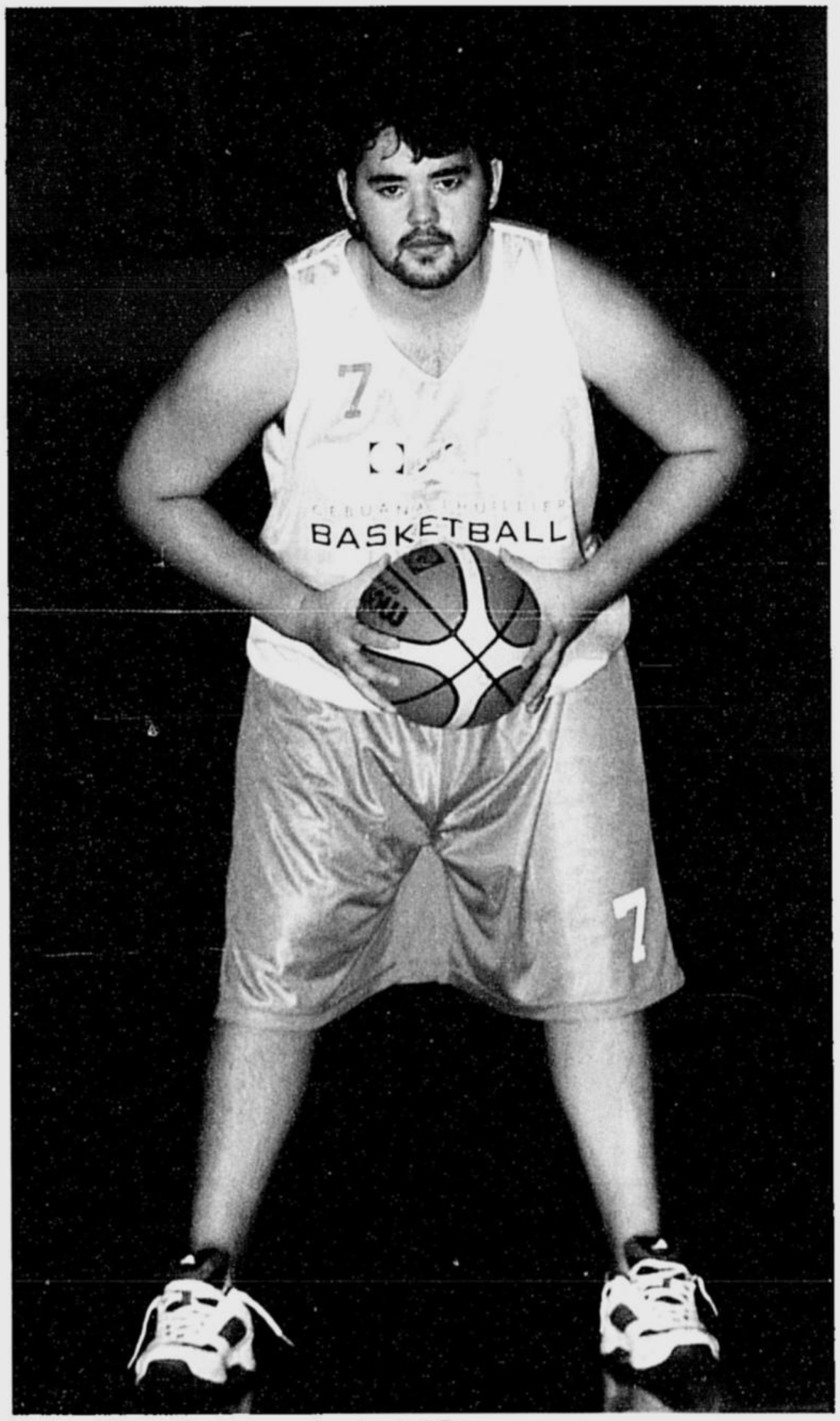
The genial giant may have again failed to shed a single pound, but at least, the constant rap on his extra poundage melted away.

"I'm comfortable with my weight. One advantage is that playing defense is easier. I can still run, I can carry my body," Bono reasons.

Prior to his explosive season, Bono had been unfairly dismissed as among the lazy, overfed big men lacking in heart and discipline.

But Bono points out that his confidence and aggressiveness improved at the prodding of Adamson coach Leo Austria.

"All the coaches I've been with wanted me to lose weight. But not coach Leo. He just told me once that if ever I reach the PBA, maybe I need to lose 20 pounds. He just told me to play my best, follow the instructions, and that's when my game started to go up," he says.



"I can still run, I can carry my body," Bono says

As one of the sought-after high school recruits from Iloilo Central Commercial High School, Bono has always been hefty but effective on court.

He admittedly felt clueless, though, when he touched down Manila for the first time to join the cellar-dwelling Falcons four years ago.

"I didn't know that Adamson was among the losing teams," Bono laughs. "I never watched the UAAP. I didn't even know about the rivalry between La Salle and Ateneo."

For 18 years, Bono lived an unadorned life with his grandmother Norma in Iloilo City.

"Since I was a baby, my *lola* took care of me while my mother was working in Olongapo," he stated.

Born Karl Kenneth on June 19, 1984, Bono assumed his mother Nonie's maiden name. He hardly knows nor talks about his American father Anthony Shannon.

"I never saw him, I never talked to him, I never looked for him. I never experienced having a father. But I saw his picture. I think he knows I play basketball. One time, when I was already playing with Adamson, he sent me a pair of shoes," he shares.

But Bono points out that his relatives filled up his father's role. When he first landed in Manila, an uncle served as his guardian in Adamson.

"When I was in elementary, I joined my *titos* in playing basketball. We played in barangays, that's how I started with the game," he recalls.

Right now, Bono has been busy playing with the Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala Moneymen in the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

But his newfound game also came with newfound attention.

"I still get embarrassed when I'm in the mall and someone approaches me," he says with a laugh.

"I try to get him out of his shell," says Maya, his girlfriend of two years. "I'm outgoing and talkative, and I try to rub it off on him. I'm a very sociable person. But he also influences me—to be patient, to be quiet, to learn that I'm not right all the time. We balance each other out."

Bono admits his low-profile approach occasionally gets perceived as arrogance. But trivial things no longer matter to the hefty cager who found love on and off court.

"Whenever I have a game, Maya's there. Her support is always there. My family in Iloilo is also proud. *Hindi ko talaga inakala na aabot ako nang ganito sa* basketball (I really didn't expect that I'd reach this far in basketball)," says Bono. •

By Margaux Salcedo

Three of the Best and the Brightest

These young chefs have trained abroad and now come home to find their dreams and establish their legacies

THERE is a new generation of chefs who will reshape the Philippine culinary industry, and it has been my privilege to have met some of them. This generation of chefs traveled and studied abroad at the onset of the country's hotel and restaurant management boom. A number of them are now back home to find their dreams and to establish their legacies, although some are still making a name for themselves abroad (always a good thing), and dreaming of coming home. Here are three chefs who've come back home to share what they have learned.

Miguel: Apprentice-based education

CARLO MIGUEL

Carlo Miguel is the executive chef of Mezza Luna, the new Italian restaurant at Serendra, Fort Bonifacio. Almost 30, he acts like he's been in the industry forever, which is not far from the truth. Carlo started working in the kitchen of a restaurant in Sydney, Australia when he was 16. In fact, all of his training—which spanned a good 10 years—was in Australia. He went to the Northern Sydney School of Culinary Arts, which he describes as "a simple community college that has the Sydney branch of Le Cordon Bleu in the campus."

The great thing about Carlo's culinary education was that it was apprentice-based, which meant that they only went to school once a week and apprenticed the rest of the week for various respected chefs throughout the country. So his training is apparently 80 percent hands on. "I did everything. I peeled onions, took out the trash, sliced vegetables…" recalls Carlo.

This hands-on training has clearly worked to his advantage. Invited by an uncle a couple of years ago, he came home and whipped up a casual dinner for family and friends. Soon enough, word of mouth had him and his brother, also a chef, fully booked for catering. At one point, he shares, they were booked for 18 dinners in one month, creating menus that ran the gamut from American to Thai. A couple of years later, he gave up the catering business and joined the team of Mezza Luna.

It is clear from our conversation on food and and restaurant ratings that his standards are definitely world class. "I wouldn't classify any restaurant here as fine dining," he boldly declares. "I wouldn't even classify (Mezza Luna) as one. I'd call this regular bistro food." The words may come across as snobbish, but in it lies some truth. In a culture of hospitality that is usually paid at the expense of standards of excellence, a snob is sometimes a breath of fresh air to the discerning few.

The discerning few and many more have followed Carlo Miguel to Mezza Luna, which has been packed from day one. (The goodies at this restaurant will take a whole other article. But I was sold on the baked gorgonzola soufflé.). Changing menus every two months, Carlo hopes to impart a sense of adventure to his clients and bring the level of culinary appreciation in this country to greater heights.

SONJA OCAMPO

Sonja Ocampo is the genius behind that adorable pink cupcake shop in Serendra, her self-titled debut pastry shop. I wrote about Serendra last December and described her cupcakes as "little drops of heaven." They are. You wouldn't think they were prepared by this shy, petite woman. (I had pictured Sonja to be a big, hefty old lady with a loud laugh!) But this woman is so dedicated to her craft that you can't judge the pastry chef by her age or weight (in spite of her profession, Sonja is amazingly model thin.)

Her training has been very focused and top of the line. She is a graduate

(continued on page 12)

Text and photographs by Alexis L. Loinaz

A Pinoy Takes Center Stage—Or Rather, He Builds It

The instinct for the theatrical has made this Bacolod native one of the foremost stage and costume designers working in the U.S. today

"ACTUALLY, I'm a scotch drinker, but since I wanted to be semi-lucid tonight, I thought a martini would be in order."

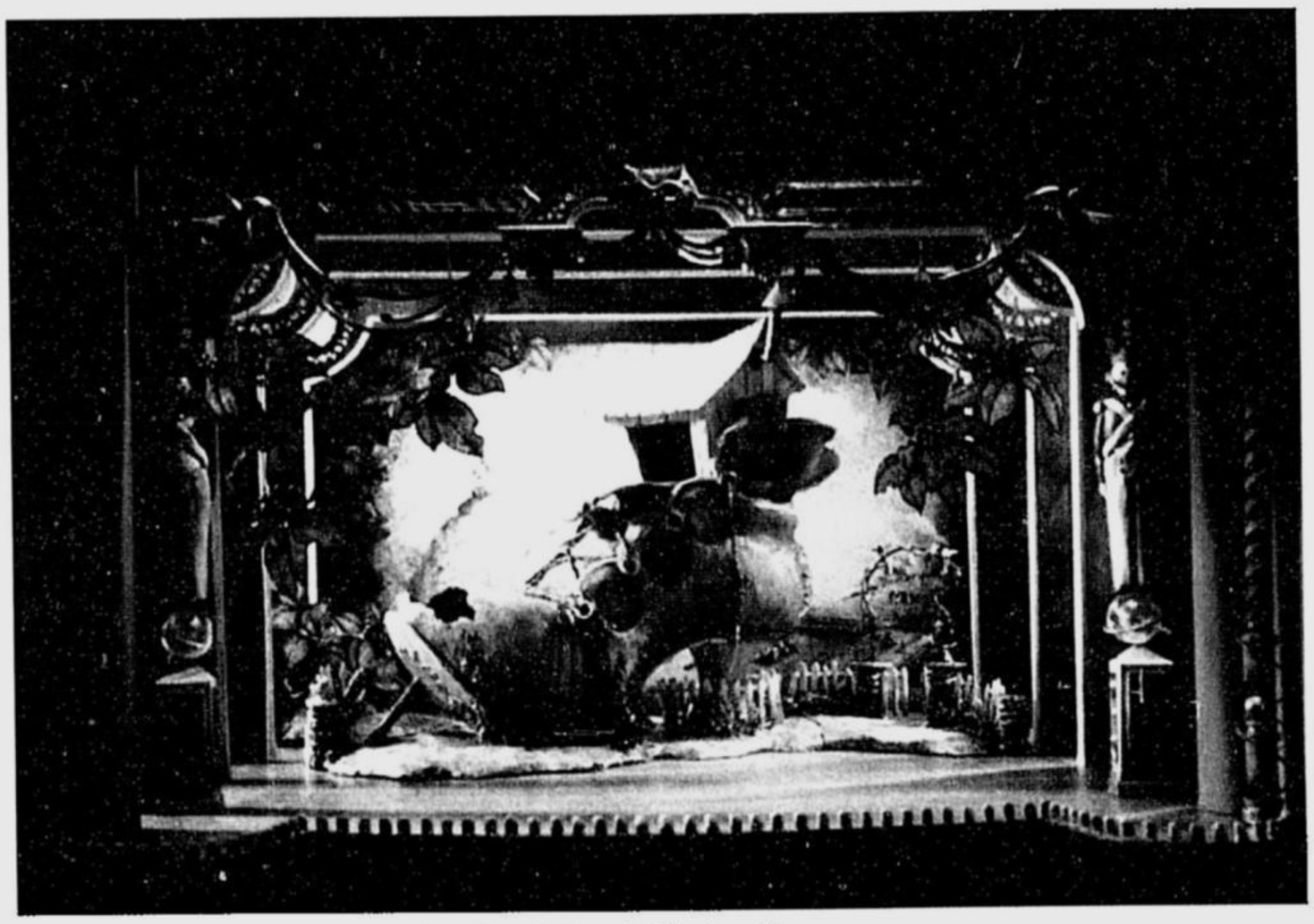
Eduardo Sicangco is sitting across from me at a cozy café in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, as he unleashes this hoot of a verbal zinger in the most deeply deadpan, uproariously disarming fashion. He narrows his eyes, flashes a devious grin, and takes a sip from his classic martini.

He has agreed to meet me at this café, and the potent drink ends up lubricating a conversation that starts off politely, pleasantly, and ends up oozing with enough endearingly acerbic asides to make a Woody Allen film seem anemic.

You see, spending time with Eduardo is like finding yourself in the middle of a raucous and irreverent Broadway play—I'm half-expecting a Playbill to be handed to me by ushers, and I'm waiting for an audience to burst into applause or laughter. He has an uncanny understanding of the inherent wit, cadences and theatricality of everyday life, and you can sense this in his wry, charming repartee: It unspools like something out of a Noel Coward play.

It's this instinct for the theatrical that has served him well: Eduardo is one of the foremost stage and costume designers working in the United States today.

His works have appeared on the stages of some of the most illustrious American cultural institutions, such as the New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. He's designed for Broadway ("Gentlemen Prefer Blondes"), Off-Broadway ("Queen Amarantha," "Das Barbecu") and even the Radio City Rockettes. His keen populist sensibilities have also led him to work with the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Siegfried and Roy, and Disney on Ice.



Major oeuvre: An opulent design for "Babes in Toyland"

Clearly, Eduardo is exceptional at what he does. In its 1994 review of "Das Barbecu"—a humorous retelling of Wagner's "Ring" cycle, set in Texas—The New York Times raved that his "scenery and costumes are ingenious in conveying the … spirit of tacky glamour."

"I'm a very instinctive designer," Eduardo says. "When I read a script, I pride myself in that I'm very good at getting the tone of the piece. … And so the training is how to tell that story visually, so that it nails it, it supports it, it enhances it. That's what I love about theater: that you're telling stories."

It's this facility for storytelling that has won the 52-year-old a cadre of admirers. "He has such a rich vocabulary wedded to a secure technical sense in terms of line, silhouette, form," says playwright Jim Luigs, a frequent collaborator who recently worked with Eduardo on staging a postmodern update of the Cinderella story, "The Plexiglass Slipper," at the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Florida. "He can find the paradigm, the cognate, the allusion to an iconic character from ballet, opera or a musical. His work is referential and reverential in a very exciting way."

Eduardo developed this visual vocabulary early on, as a child growing up in Bacolod in the '50s and '60s. The third sibling in a brood of five, Eduardo was raised in an artistic household: His father was a musical-theater aficionado with a vast collection of cast recordings, and his mother was a lyric soprano. She sensed his talent early on, and hired a private art teacher for him.

Eduardo's younger sister is Cecile Sicangco-Ibarrola, the renowned principal dancer and former artistic director of Ballet Philippines. As kids,

he was already making her tutus for her dance recitals. Cecile recalls this time fondly. "In one of my dance recitals in Bacolod," she tells me via e-mail, "he designed my 'Nutcracker' tutu and fully sequined the bodice that it scratched my male partner all over his forearm each time he had to support me in my pirouettes."

Eduardo's own memory of his youth is vivid and wondrous. His grandmother, who lived an hour away and who was a huge movie buff, would visit the family on weekends and take Eduardo with her for marathon movie screenings at local theaters. This, Eduardo says, "clinched the deal. Very early on, I was exposed to Hollywood. And that started it (being) imprinted on me."

After heading to Manila to study college at the Ateneo, Eduardo took a stage-design class taught by the man who would eventually become his mentor: National Artist Badong Bernal. It was Badong who gave Eduardo his professional debut, commissioning the up and coming designer to create the sets for "The Nutcracker" and "Le Carnaval," which were staged by Ballet Philippines at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in the mid-'70s.

This cemented Eduardo's passion for stage design, and in 1976 he hightailed it to New York for his MFA in stage design at New York University. After doing a string of small shows, he got his big break—two of them, in fact: He caught the eye of the producers of Disney on Ice, who were having their sets built at the same shop where Badong was working on a project. Around the same time, he met two producers at a cocktail party who were pitching a show to Radio City Music Hall; they asked him to come onboard. That show was picked up, and Eduardo's career took off.

He's been based in New York ever since those grad-school days; until recently, he also taught a sets-and-costumes class at NYU. And it's the only place he's ever wanted to live in. "It's like biting off the Big Apple and tasting the forbidden fruit and you're changed forever," he muses. "You're blessed and cursed at the same time because you operate on a different level, which is neither better nor worse, but it's just different. You don't suffer fools gladly."

For Eduardo, his work is his life. And nothing illustrates this fusion more than where he works: from home. A few days after our meeting at the café, he invites me to swing by his downtown apartment. He currently lives alone, and it's the only home he's ever had in New York for 30 years now. ("I like roots," he says.)

The one-bedroom abode is a study in creative, organized chaos: It looks like a bomb went off here, hurling shrapnels of art materials in every conceivable direction. Colored pencils, paint tubes, scale-model pieces, rulers, paint brushes—they blanket his two main work tables and spill out onto the floor, the shelves, even a nearby piano (which he still plays). An old VHS tape of "The Sound of Music" has been flung nearby; it's dusty. There's an ancient fax machine here, too; it hasn't worked in a while.

"Rich visual vocabulary": It looks like a creative bomb went off in Eduardo s chaotic downtown apartment

The shelves themselves are lined with design-themed books: "The Art of Country Houses," "Dior in Vogue," "Hommage a Balenciaga," "Corsets and Crinolines." On top of his main drafting table is a row of what he calls his "show bibles"—binders filled with accoutrements from each show he's done, such as scripts, production schedules, cast measurements, fabric swatches and set drawings.

Eduardo tells me that this is only a quarter of everything he has; the rest are in his bedroom, which has remained off-limits. The bedroom door itself has a huge letter "S" on it, which Eduardo jokes stands for "sleep, sex, Sicangco, slumber, snore, whatever you want to call it." (I've decided on "secretive.")

Although Eduardo has lived in New York for more than half his life, he credits his Filipino heritage with giving him an edge in a very competitive industry. "As a designer, the Philippines is the luckiest place to be from in terms of frames of reference," he says. "We are Malay, we are Spanish, we are American-Hollywood, we are Muslim. We know Japan, we are Oriental. I get Spanish architecture right away (snaps fingers). I get nipa huts, I get mosques. It's in the psyche. And to have that come naturally to you is a big, big advantage."

"He is always passionate with his creations," Cecile notes. "He has to find the energy that would inspire him, or not do it at all. He has the courage to express his ingenuity. And that is his strength."

In 1997, the two siblings came full circle when Eduardo collaborated with Cecile on the sets and costumes for Ballet Philippines' staging of "Romeo & Juliet" at the CCP. And yes, he designed her outfit—Cecile says it was the most beautiful costume she had ever worn. Both remember their joint curtain call, when they stepped out to take a bow. Their mother was in the audience. He describes the experience as "heaven."

"It's the one moment that I will never forget," Eduardo says, his eyes betraying a subtle, watery glint. "This is why I do what I do. It couldn't get any better than this." •

Impa Leon

By Alya B. Honasan

Beauty, According to Vicki Belo

The country's most well-known cosmetic surgeon and guru of pulchritude talks about beauty– –wanting it, glorifying it, and making it available to anyone who wants it

OF COURSE, we had to ask her about it. After years of letting her celebrity endorsers take the limelight in traffic-stopping billboards, Vicki Belo, surgeon to the stars, finally stood smack in the middle of one herself this last holiday season. And it was no less than the Mother Board, looming over the Guadalupe Bridge in Edsa, and featuring Belo in a yellow gown alongside Ara Mina, Lucy Torres-Gomez, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Pops Fernandez, Troy Montero, Albert Martinez, John Lloyd Cruz, and Piolo Pascual. "The Power of Beauty," the billboard declared.

The photo was taken for a glossy magazine by veteran lensman Jun de Leon. "We put it up there because it took so much effort to get it done!" Belo wails in her *colegiala* voice. "It wasn't my idea, because I was depressed, I was fat, I was having a bad day, and I was stressed out. Jun told me honestly that I was the most *pangit* one in the picture!"

It was actually the idea of Joey Santos, Belo's manager cum business adviser and long-time boyfriend, to make the photo a billboard, the Belo Group's universal Christmas card. "That made it more palatable for me, plus *madami kami,"* Belo says almost sheepishly. "I did get feedback from friends, and now I know who my real friends are!" If you've missed it by the time you read this, all is lost—until next Christmas, maybe, as the billboard had a three-week lifespan, and Belo doesn't plan to make such appearances regular. *"Ang kapal naman ng mukha ko, ano?* I have no illusions about how I look."

Vicki Belo is nothing if not candid. It's the week between Christmas and New Year, and she's lounging on a couch in her sprawling Ramon Antonio house, what she jokingly calls "the house that fat built." There's a lanai where she meditates for an hour each morning, as Belo is up at 5 a.m. There are souvenirs from her many travels, although she admittedly doesn't enjoy sitting "and just doing nothing." Her idea of a treat, in fact, is curling up with a good book. The whole set-up is a combination of image and reality, as Belo admits that many of her trappings have everything to do with image. "That's why I would buy the latest

Jim Guiao Punzalan

"All I am is a choice"

Vuitton bag even if it's expensive—I have an image to maintain."

There are paintings by Arturo Luz, crystals and silverware, but there are also four little dogs—Lars, Maui, Truffles and Brownie—who unabashedly roll all over the carpet and are not shooed away from the dining table in this home that Belo shares with her son Quark, a noted director, and daughter Cristalle, who works for her mom.

Today, there's a shoot of actress Angel Locsin as the newest Belo endorser, and a procession of stylists and assistants troop into the house. "And you are...?" Belo amiably asks the latest unfamiliar face. But it's all good, as Belo knows it's all in the name of beauty.

And Vicki Belo is absolutely obsessed with beauty. She raves about the book "Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty" by Harvard anthropologist Nancy Etcoff, which explains people's attraction to such assets as large breasts and a good butt as mechanisms for perpetuating the species.

As a kid, she was already into dressing up and playing makeover, having overcome a weight problem as a child. "In fact, I had this traumatic experience when I was in my BS Psychology course at the University of the Philippines," Belo recounts. "I'm not beautiful, but I'm cute, and sometimes that's better because people think you're more approachable. So when I was in third year college, sexy *din ako*, and all these guys were carrying my books and paying attention to me."

Then, Belo got sick and missed school for three weeks, gaining 20 lbs. in the process. "When I went back to school looking fatter, all these guys *ignored* me!" she exclaims. "I was so angry! I was the same person, but just because you're fat, *di ka na pala papansinin* (they won't mind you). That experience never left me. I realized that all the popular girls are pretty, even if they're not even nice or smart; you're forgiven if you're beautiful. This world is so unfair, and it's just because of your luck in the gene pool."

That, Belo says, is her mission, waving her hand like a fairy godmother. "I just want the world to be fair, because if everyone is beautiful, it ceases to become a factor. Then you will be judged on integrity and character. I love getting a girl who's not beautiful, but who will become beautiful after we

(continued on page 10)

Beauty, According to Vicki Belo (from page 9)

treat her. You give it to them, and their lives change."

Such is the power of beauty. Yet, she adds, it's a power that's not hers. "I always pray before I work, that I do the right thing. I'm just a conduit, but I do take it personally when something doesn't turn out perfect. Besides, everything I've done has always been about me. I used to have such bad skin, so I became a dermatologist. I used to have a weight problem, so I got into liposuction. I like investing in new stuff and I'm always into the future, so I'm very much into lasers. Fortunately, my problems are other people's problems, too."

Belo doesn't mind acknowledging how her work has made her rich, but resents it when people assume it's all for the money. "That's my quarrel with a lot of people getting into it now, who are saying, wow, *gandang negosyo.* I got into this mainly because I love it. I still travel a lot to learn, I'm in Paris every three months now to study anti-aging. And I'm willing to try everything on myself." That's why Belo first tried liposuction, Botox, Thermage and other procedures on herself, so she knows what her patients are getting into.

Jun de Leon

"Everything I've done has always been about me," Belo admits

To those who are still afraid of cosmetic surgery, she says, relax. "All I am is a choice. I mean, I admire people who don't get anything done, who are so comfortable with their bodies that they're happy. But we're not all like that."

What Vicki Belo is, is a study in hard work. Adopted by her aunt when she was a child, she grew up in a strange state of being both sibling and non-sibling to her eight blood brothers and sisters. "I think being adopted made me stronger and made me work harder," she recalls. "You have so many issues. For the longest time, you want your birth parents to say, *sayang*, we gave you away, and then you're also worried that your adopted parents will give you back." Belo told her story on GMA 7's *"Magpakailanman,"* starring, irony of ironies, former friend and endorser Rosanna Roces as the *doctora*. Afterwards, Belo would be accosted many times by people who identified with her experiences.

Belo trained in dermatology in Thailand, and after her folks set her up in a clinic in Manila, she recalls working on a dermatological emergency at Makati Medical Center; an actress was breaking out in "volcanic" zits after using a new cosmetic. That actress was accompanied by Boy Abunda, who would offer to help the bubbly Belo with her publicity. After Regine Velasquez, her first official celebrity client (Regine's manager, Ronnie Henares, was her then brother-in-law, as Belo was previously married to businessman Atom Henares), a constellation of stars began queueing outside her clinic. "Because of Boy, the stars would go to me, and when people read about it, they wanted to go where the stars went. That's why I owe Boy Abunda a lot."

That was 17 years ago, and Belo hasn't looked back since. She loves being called "doctor to the stars," but with reservations. "For them to trust me with their looks, their *hanapbuhay*, is a big compliment. But I don't like it in a sense that it intimidates other patients. That's why going to Belo requires a little more guts than going to another doctor, even if 80 percent of my patients are not stars."

She foresees even more high-tech beauty treatments in the future, many of them non-invasive. "Facelifts don't look like plastic anymore, you know." It will be an exciting 2007, in fact, as Belo will be launching Belo for Men, as well as a much-awaited line of skincare products that more people can afford.

There are now 22 doctors working for the Belo Medical Group, including nutritionists who give post-liposuction advice—and psychologists who try to find out why a client is really so keen on that makeover.

"My usual first line is, 'What can I do to help you?'" Belo says. "I always talk to patients first. Sometimes it's a deep self-esteem problem. That's what I like about this job. You can change lives by just doing one thing, and they're so much more confident, and don't need years of therapy." If that's not power, what is? •

By Margaux Salcedo
Photographs by Rudy Esperas

They're Making Way For Marnie Arcilla

This Filipino stage actress in New York certainly worked hard to get where she is, recounts her friend and one-time Big Apple neighbor

"DON'T ever let anyone tell you who you are."

That was Marnie Arcilla's loving advice to me when I left Manhattan in 2004, handwritten in a little Bon Voyage card. At the time she had just graduated from the American Musical and Dramatic Academy and was mulling over whether to accept the role of Kim in "Miss Saigon" at the Forestburgh Playhouse, or to be part of the ensemble and understudy of Belle in "Beauty and the Beast" at the North Shore Musical Theater in Boston. She was more keen on performing at North Shore, whose prestige comes next only to Broadway in the theater world, even if this meant holding off on a lead role.

Later, I learned that she accepted the role of Kim anyway because the top professors of the Academy had heard of her dilemma, gathered themselves into a conference room and called her with this message: "You are a star, darling, not a plate." (Being in the ensemble for "Beauty and the Beast" meant she would have had to play a teacup or a plate.)

And Marnie has proven her professors right. Immediately after playing Kim, she found her dream of performing at North Shore as the understudy of Amneris in the hit Elton John musical "Aida." After that, she graduated to playing the lead in "Making Tracks," a musical "about Asian-American history" that played in San Jose, California. Then New York beckoned

"You are a star, darling," Marnie s former professors once told her

again with "The Ark," a musical about Noah's ark, after which came "Sidd," a musical version of Herman Hesse's novel "Siddhartha." Marnie landed the lead in both musicals, with her performances reviewed by no less than The New York Times. ("Sidd's" casting director Alan Filderman, whom Marnie did not know personally, actually gave her a call and asked her to audition, saying, "I saw your name on a chatboard. Don't you read it? Everyone's crazy about you on the chatboard." Freaky call, but Marnie took the risk and landed the lead.)

All this she accomplished in a short span of two years. Lucky? Sure. But if luck is on Marnie's side it's because she has earned every bit of it. If New York has been kind, it's because she has paid her dues.

During my stay in New York, I lived next door to Marnie in the Upper West Side and saw how she went from audition to audition while working as a bartender at a posh restaurant near Rockefeller Plaza. She has also been a hostess, coat check girl, and even sold bread at the market.

"That's how I survived," she recalls. "I traded the unsold bread to other vendors for food." Of course, in New York there is dignity of labor and these jobs are all understandable because you have to pay rent. "New York is a hard city," Marnie reflects. "You have to keep running or you get trampled." But these have added to her as a person and she feels she has more to offer as an actress, having experienced both the ups and downs of life's roller coaster. "I feel I have more to bring to the table because I've done different things, having experienced starving and struggling in New York."

The struggling applies as well to her theater days. Marnie's very first audition found her in tears. It was for "The Lion King" and the casting directors had flown her from Canada,

(continued on page 13)

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

. 7 .	. . .	9 . .
9 . .	. 4 .	2 . .
5 . .	7 . .	4 . .
. . .	2 7 6	. . 1
. . .	. . .	. . .
4 . .	9 5 8	. . .
. . 5	. . 1	. . 8
. . 3	. 9 .	. . 7
. . 8	. . .	. 6 .

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 1/14

Answer to previous puzzle

6 1 2	9 5 8	3 7 4
4 5 7	3 1 6	2 8 9
9 3 8	7 2 4	6 5 1
5 8 9	4 6 2	1 3 7
3 7 4	1 8 9	5 6 2
1 2 6	5 3 7	4 9 8
8 4 5	2 9 3	7 1 6
7 6 1	8 4 5	9 2 3
2 9 3	6 7 1	8 4 5

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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Three of the Best and the Brightest (from page 1

of the Baking and Pastry Arts Program of Peter Kump's New York Cooking School (now called the Institute of Culinary Education), as well as the Wilton School of Cake Decorating in Illinois. After graduating, she "begged for a job" at Bouley, New York's longest running famed restaurant/bakery, offering to work for free. They obviously saw her extraordinary dedication and talent because she got a sponsorship and ended up working with the restaurant for over two years, where she honed her skills by closely observing no less than David Bouley, Marc Aumont and Bill Yosses themselves.

Returning to New York in 2005, she noticed a cupcake boom pioneered by the Magnolia Bakery. She worked out a stint at this cupcake shop, learning from no less than the owner Barbara Di Nicola.

She came back home the same year and started taking orders for pastries again. Then Serendra invited her to open a shop and the rest is history. Already she has single-handedly altered the landscape of the Philippine pastry industry by introducing this fresh cupcake concept. And she is only 28. Let's hope she keeps herself on a roll!

Sonja s dreamy Choco Cream Pie

RJ UNGCO

RJ Ungco is the chef of Ponzo's Restaurant by the St. Alphonsus de Ligouri Church in Magallanes Village. Ponzo's is a simple village restaurant with continental cuisine for very reasonable prices. (Best on the menu is the puttanesca. His pizzas are very reasonable at P145 a box.)

RJ's training was at Les Roches School of Hotel Management in Switzerland. Under Swiss-German professors, he learned to be precise, disciplined and patient. Students here were trained to work 14-hour work days and to always be on time. Upon graduation, RJ worked as an apprentice at a hotel in Italy where he mastered Italian cooking. Today he applies German discipline to his work, blends this with an Italian passion for flavor, and tops everything with Filipino hospitality, adding a personal touch to his service by delivering orders himself and making sure the customer gets what he wants.

Since coming back to the Philippines, he has done catering for no less than Malacañang, where his Swiss training came in handy as attention to detail was required: research had to be made on every guest's food preferences, allergies, etc. In 2005, RJ went to New York on an exchange apprenticeship and handled a team for a high brow benefit dinner for Hurricane Katrina victims. The dinner had a guest list of 160 and RJ's team of five whipped up dinner for 60 guests.

Coming back from the City, a restaurant with a unique concept (which I cannot as yet divulge) is in the works. So just hold your breath...

* * *

Suffice it to say that there are a lot of other promising young chefs out there that I haven't yet stumbled upon or heard of. Watch out, I promise to hunt you down! •

Taking risks: Marnie, rightmost, as the Blue Girl in the musical "Shout!"

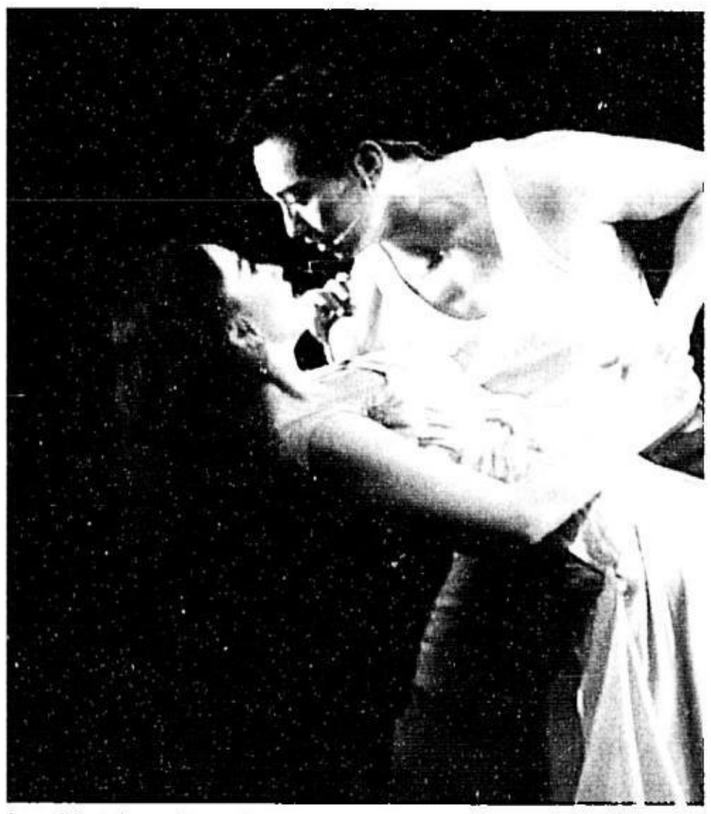
They're Making Way For Marnie Arcilla (from page 11)

where she was working at a health company, to New York. "I was already making a list in my head of who to invite," she recalls. "But I didn't get the role and I cried for three days. My officemates (in Canada) sent me a note that read, 'You're still our star.'" New York had said that they felt she wasn't ready.

Resilient as she is, though, Marnie looked at the positive side: the fact that the directors, who had no clue about her television background in the Philippines, had flown her to New York on the basis of nothing but her raw talent. "It took me a while but I realized that if I got there with no head shot, no music, no resumé, (she just walked in at the auditions with nothing but herself) what could I have accomplished if I had training?" She left Canada, moved to Manhattan and enrolled in theater school.

This disposition and unrelenting passion for the stage has spelled success and it's great to see how this "Ang TV" teeny bopper cutesy-patootsie girl followed the path of a serious theater actor instead of getting into sensational but shortlived fame. She laughs at a chatboard that discussed and rated former "*Ang* TV" actors where she found herself in a list of "Those Who Did Not Make It." But following her own advice, she never let anyone tell her who she is and continued toward her true north, ignoring the chatboard list.

In spite of initial hesitations, Marnie pursued musical theater. "When I got into theater, I realized what a craft acting is and not just *pa*-cute, like on '*Ang* TV.' I realized the skills needed and the challenge you face. It's a lot harder to keep the audience interested, to find the truth every night and to keep it real. That was a



In "Making Tracks," a musical about Asian-American history staged in San Jose, California

discovery for me."

For someone whose very first role was as an extra in "Carousel" (in elementary school)—"I was the girl eating ice cream. All I did was walk the stage. But I was onstage, I didn't care!"—she has certainly come a long way. She has just finished her stint as the Blue Girl, another lead role, in the off-Broadway musical "Shout!," her most widely-reviewed New York performance to date. But the mature Marnie, whom New York has gotten to know instead as Marie France, humbly puts things in perspective. "I don't think I've made it," she says emphatically, "because there is still so much to strive for."

In her eyes, she may not have made it. By New York or international standards, that may be arguable. But having been cast opposite Maru Narayan of "Bombay Dreams" in "Sidd," having been cast as a lead four times in a row, having guested on the "Today Show," and having been critiqued by The New York Times, no one can deny—and the Philippines is proud—that Marnie Arcilla has arrived. •

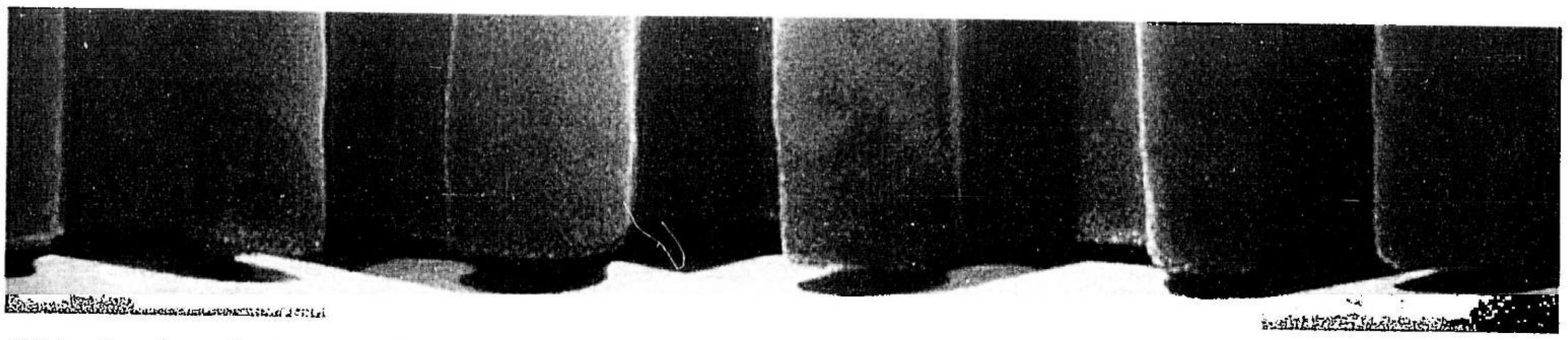
Graphic remembrance

IF the death toll and wholesale destruction that took place on Sept. 11, 2001 in the United States continue to boggle your mind, then it's time to take one step forward in understanding what really happened.

One good place to begin is with an amazing book. "The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation" by Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon (Hill and Wang, available at National Book Store; P815) is exactly what the title states. It's a comic book adaptation of the official U.S. government report on what went wrong on 9/11. Everything. It's heartbreaking and confusing but also enlightening, particularly the first section which details the hijackers' timeline as they set about their terrible task. The later portions are dense and informative but it all pales to the reality that there really are no easy answers, even from the official report.

Ably assembled by veteran comic book creators Jacobson and Colon, "The 9/11 Report" brings a new audience closer to terms with what happened, and perhaps lead that new audience to continue asking questions. Just like how earlier generations were introduced to the great books through the Classics Illustrated comic books, so can "The 9/11 Report" pioneer a nonfiction series of comic books.

In the meantime, one can pause and remember one of the worst tragedies to ever happen in our time by reading this book—and then dream of a better world. **Ruel S. De Vera**



Click behind the curtain

Yes, he writes on theater, among other things, for the INQUIRER, but Gibbs Cadiz keeps a blog (www.gibbscadiz.com) that skews wide and witty on matters oriented with both stage and screen—and beyond.

Recent points of discussion include the myriad incarnations of ZsaZsa Zaturnnah, the life of Jose Rizal and Cadiz's favorite YouTube treasures. It's quite a ride and Cadiz doesn't hold his tongue. Find out what he considers *laos* (passé) and what's not.

Read and discover how not to write a press release ("Forget the words and turns of phrase that you imagine will send readers into orgasms. Haller, you're in PR, not creative writing"), how to remember John Lennon and, best of all, read some of the most incisive and entertaining insights on different local stage productions. **RSDV**

Figure It Out

4.8 percent: Growth in the Philippines' Gross Development Product for the third quarter of 2006

P907.6 billion: Current national budget

P58.3 billion: Philippine budget deficit from January to November 2006

P594.1 billion: Total tax collection by the Bureau of Internal Revenue from January to November 2006

P620.9 billion: BIR collection target from January to November 2006

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

Beauty before Botox

BACK in the old days when papaya still meant a hearty bowl of *tinola* and actress Amalia Fuentes (shown here in a soap ad in her younger days) was being hailed as the "Elizabeth Taylor of the Philippines," women washed their faces with soap and water and counted on nature to do the rest. Being pretty meant being born with the right genes, preferably mestiza: fair and smooth of skin, thin of lips, and with a nose that extended to there. Going under the knife always meant a life-and-death situation, and wrinkles, sagging jowls and thunder thighs hardly qualify.

But alas, the days of natural beauty are gone and these days, when they're not lathering skin whitening creams and unguents, people surrender their bodies to newfound sculptors of flesh—cosmetic surgeons who charge an arm and a leg to create a brand new being oblivious, it seems, to the ravages of time and stress. A flick of the scalpel, and even the plainest Jane gets a chance at stardom or a billboard ad. Who needs mother nature indeed?!

Why not the world?

– Lea Salonga

Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.

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